

THE
FALSE FRIENDS.

A
NOVEL.

In a SERIES of LETTERS.

By the Author of the RING.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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P R E F A C E.

THINKING the following sheets demand some introduction to a Public, to whom the author is entirely unknown, I sit down to write a preface to these, though others have past without one. How I shall succeed, some future period must determine. I have not the vanity to suppose they will pass without criticism, though I hope not too severe, as I have merely endeavoured to shew my readers the wide difference between virtue and vice, without the least intention of lashing the follies of any particular persons: wishing to amuse, but not to give pain. It was a whim first incited me to take up my pen; and that whim continuing, I proceeded.

Now,

Now, my gentle readers, I must beg your to peruse these volumes with some indulgence ; for please to understand, the author is young, inexperienced, and a female.

*“ A female ! cries the beau, (as his valet
“ is adjusting his hair) why sure a woman
“ can never pretend to write !”*

And why not, my friend ? ’Tis true, you think if a woman can write her own name, be a good æconomist, and keep herself out of fire and water, it is sufficient. But that, my good sirs, is not what I think ; for besides my own good opinion, there are many examples to prove my sex every whit as capable as yours.

*Now, fair ladies, a few words to you.
Honour these pages with some share of your
attention. From the characters of Sir
William*

P R E F A C E.

William and Miss Brooks, learn to beware of a false friend, and not hastily to form an acquaintance without first studying their tempers and dispositions. In short, throughout the whole, I hope you will find nothing to offend; and that you will be candid enough to own, that although there is little to amuse, there is nothing to despise; as a small share of your encouragement may again tempt me to exert my talents. Till when, I remain

Your obedient servant,

The AUTHOR.

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THE
FALSE FRIENDS.

A NOVEL.

LETTER I.

Miss WATSON to Miss E. WATSON.

London.

THE pathetic farewell of my dear sister still vibrates on my ear: Why, my dear love, was you, who naturally possess such an overflow of spirits, so entirely cast down at the parting with your Arabella?

You cannot for a moment suppose, that the gay scenes I shall here be engaged in, can make me forget my dearest friend. No, my love, every post shall convince

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B

you

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you of the contrary ; and though not with me, there is no incident of my life which can occur, that I will omit writing. But perhaps all I have said is unnecessary, as I make no doubt you have entirely overcome all those little vapourish complaints, which had for some time past clouded your brow.

After parting with you all at Axminster, I found my spirits rather depressed, but the Countess and her daughter were very gay at the thought of so soon revisiting the capital ; and assured me it was the first time they had ever prevailed on themselves to stay so long as six months from this enchanting place ; this is the title they give it ; but in my mind there is nothing enchanting in it, for though it is as fine a frosty day as can be, the whole atmosphere seems filled with a sort of smoke, that absolutely takes my breath away. The third day after parting with you, we arrived safe in Arlington-street ;
and

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and the Countess begged Lady Mary to shew me my apartment, which is spacious and elegantly furnished. The next day friseurs were sent for, and, would you believe it, I was forced to sit three hours under the hands of one of these gentry! I really thought the man would have cut all the hair off my head; besides, in its stead he has so filled it with powder and pomatum, that it is an absolute weight on my shoulders. My aunt and cousin are pleased to say this fashion makes a great improvement; but I cannot agree with them in opinion.

In the evening we went to the opera; the theatre is elegant, the music delightful, as is the singing, and the dancing inimitable: the *Petite Theodore* is the reigning favourite. There were several ladies and gentlemen my aunt and cousin knew, who obligingly noticed me, when they heard my relationship to the Countess of Chorlebury. To day we are so

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have company to dinner; we breakfasted at ten, though Lady Mary tells me that is an earlier hour than they do in general; but are not to dine till five. I laughed, and said I should fancy myself sitting down to supper, to see the room full of candles. Ah! my dear Eliza, I fear I shall often wish myself at *Elm-Wood*, before the winter is over; and so I told Lady Mary, who rallied me on my rusticity. For heaven's sake! child, (said she) don't tell any person so, for I shall be shocked to death to have it known a *relative* of mine had no more taste!

So you see, my dear, I must be very careful. The intolerable hair-dresser waits, therefore must conclude in haste, but shall resume my pen to-morrow. Adieu.

Yours affectionately,

ARABELLA WATSON.

I write to papa and mamma by the same post.

LETTER

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LETTER II.

Mrs ELIZA WATSON to Mrs NEWTON.

Elm-Wood.

MY Harriot in her last expresses her fears for my health; as you say it is a long time since you have heard from me. It was neither owing to want of health, or neglect, my dear, I assure you, but the parting with an amiable sister, who, I am afraid, before I see here again, will be sacrificed to a man, that may perhaps make her miserable for life. You are astonished, but I fear I have too much reason for my conjecture.

My poor sister as yet knows nothing of their intentions, but you I will acquaint of the whole.

You may remember my telling you about two months ago, of our expecting the Countess of Chorlebury and her daughter Lady Mary Manly. The Coun-

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tefs is my mamma's own fister. The Earl faw her at a ball, fell in love with and married her, before ſhe had attained her fixteenth year.

I cannot help obſerving how unhappy (at leaſt the majority, as here it was not the caſe) thoſe of our ſex are, who ſo early commence wives, as they can ſcarce have a right conception of the ſacred vow they are about to take, if the huſband happens to be not an extraordinary one. He in a ſhort time grows tired, moroſe, and peeviſh; treats his wife with a neglect, which ſhe thinks authoriſes her to throw herſelf into the arms of the firſt libertine ſhe meets. To be ſure, if the lady has been educated in the ſtrict rules of virtue and decorum (but how few of our modern women of faſhion have been ſo educated; for are they not almoſt as ſoon as they can ſpeak, put under the tuition of a French gouvernante, who has

not

not a due sense of one proper virtue to instil into the female mind).

But as I before observed, if they have been properly educated, they will never think of retaliating the evil on themselves. In short, I am persuaded that some of our divorces are owing to this; for I cannot be a friend to a woman's marrying till she is past twenty, or at least out of her teens, she may then be capable of judging for herself; but how can a girl who has just left the nursery and doll, be supposed able to fulfil the duties of a wife, and a mother?

I hope my Harriot will pardon this digression; for the thoughts of my dear sister perhaps being forced soon to marry a man she cannot like, makes me grave. To be sure she is eighteen, and perhaps (pardon a sister's partiality) has more solid sense at that age, than many of seven or eight and twenty; but as I was telling you above, the Earl of Chorlebury mar-

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ried my mamma's sister before she was sixteen, though in spite of what I have said, I never heard but what they were as happy as the generality of our people of fashion now are. They have one daughter, who had but just attained her thirteenth year when she lost the Earl her father. We had not seen the Countess or her fair daughter for near a year and half; but about two months since, a letter came to inform papa and mamma, they would pay them a visit; they accordingly came. My aunt pressed my father to let my sister and me go up to town with her, adding she made no doubt but we should soon get husbands. We smiled at this, thinking it a mere jest. My father at that time made little or no reply; but how amazed was I when my sister and Lady Mary quitted the room, to hear him say, "are you really sincere, my Lady, " in your offer to take my daughters to " town? Certainly Sir, (replied my Lady) " both

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“ both with great pleasure. No, my Lady,
“ (rejoined my father) one at a time, we
“ cannot spare both at once; and as
“ Arabella is the eldest, she must be first.
“ I have long wished for an opportunity
“ of sending them to town, nay once
“ thought, great as my disgust is to the
“ metropolis, to go there this winter my-
“ self. Arabella is really a good girl, to
“ say nothing of her person. She has
“ had an excellent education, and princi-
“ ples of virtue and religion have been
“ early instilled into her mind by the best
“ of mothers: add to this, I shall give
“ each of them when they marry (provi-
“ ded it is with a man I shall approve)
“ thirty thousand pounds; therefore, my
“ lady, if you please, take Arabella to
“ town with you, and provide her with a
“ husband (but he must be a man of fa-
“ mily and fortune, *mind that*) before the
“ winter is out, and I will be obliged to
“ you. Dear papa! cried I, before the

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“ winter is out ! how is it possible for my
 “ sister to know if she likes a man in so
 “ short a time well enough to marry
 “ him ? Hey-day ! lady fair, (answered
 “ he) who bid you speak ? pray keep your
 “ advice till it is asked ; what do you
 “ think men now a days will stand court-
 “ ing for seven years as you read they
 “ did in old romances ? No, no, child,
 “ women are to be had cheaper now than
 “ at that time.”

“ Yes, answered the Countess, it is
 “ very true my dear, there are some of
 “ my acquaintance who knew each other
 “ but three weeks or a month before they
 “ were married. Pray, madam, are they
 “ happy ? Happy (interrupted my father)
 “ what should make them otherwise ? but
 “ I desire Miss on pain of my displeasure
 “ you mention nothing of this conversa-
 “ tion to your sister.” I assured him if
 it was his orders I should not,

From

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From several more hints that were dropt during the Countess's stay, I am sure the first man she approves will be forced on our poor Arabella, and doubt she will have no great reason to approve my aunt's choice; as I am certain she will think nothing but a title and good estate requisite to make her happy. However she is gone and I have nothing but to hope all is for the best; my mamma tells me to do so, though she is far from approving my father's precipitancy of proceeding. This my dear accounts for my silence, as I could not settle to any thing till she was gone.

Poor Frampton was quite in the dumps at her going, but she never having given him any encouragement, he has given her up, and wholly attaches himself to me, till a new face comes in his way. This letter is a very long one, my dear, and I think you will believe me when I

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tell you, I am heartily tired of writing, as I imagine you will be of reading; therefore, adieu.

Yours,

ELIZA WATSON.

LETTER III.

The Right Hon. LORD WIMBLETON
to R. RIVERS, Esq.

London.

THANK heaven, Bob, I am at length got to this gay metropolis once more, though I must own my pleasure is a little alloyed at not finding our worship here. It is impossible to tell what I have endured these two months past at camp; the rains have been so heavy, we have lain in water almost every night, and our Colonel was so plaguy obstinate, he would make us sleep in our tents let the weather be what it would, because "forsooth,"
the

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the common men would not mind their duty, if their superiors did not. Faith, Bob, I was almost distracted, for through the inclemency of the weather there was scarce a pretty woman left; we were obliged therefore to have recourse to cards, and they have almost —, but no matter, great as my aversion is to the state, I must marry; for upon my soul, Rivers, I am confoundedly out at the elbows: therefore a wife with a large fortune must mend my condition. To be sure I could mortgage a part of my father's estate, but as he has always behaved generously to me, and allowed me very amply, I cannot bring myself to do so mean an action.

Marry therefore I must; though I have not yet found out a woman I should like. She must be of "family and fortune," or she would not please my father; nor indeed me; I shall look about me, and when I have found one to my mind, I
will

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will marry her, if she approves me. I would not have her of too delicate a texture; as perhaps she will be unable to bear that indifference I am afraid I should be apt to treat her with, after being married a few months; for you know, Bob, variety is my delight, and there is no existence for me without a mistress; therefore I again repeat, she must not be of too refined an understanding. Do not mistake me, I mean not to use her ill. Her house, servants, dress, and furniture, shall be all of her chusing; in short, she shall have every thing at her command but me; as she must neither expect to pin me to her side, or adorn my forehead, as the lady of a certain *Knight* of your acquaintance and mine has lately done.

Methinks I have written enough of matrimony, but having nothing else worth committing to paper, I may as well conclude.

I have written enough of matrimony, but having nothing else worth committing to paper, I may as well conclude. They

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They talk of a peace here. What say they in your part of the world? It is said it cannot be an honourable one; I for my part care not a jot whether it is honourable or not, provided there is one; for I am heartily sick of our summer encampments; and had much rather be with the gallant Rodney in the West Indies, or the no less gallant Elliot at the besieging of Gibraltar, than pent up in a little dirty town doing nothing. Fare-wel; write soon.

Yours, &c.

HENRY WIMBLETON.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

Miss WATSON to Miss ELIZA WATSON.

Arlington-Street.

I Received my dear sister's letter, and am happy to find your wonted spirits returned.

My papa and mamma too are both well, therefore your happy sister, my Eliza, has nothing to do but write all that passes here, that is the request that each dear epistle contains, and I should think myself very ungrateful if I did not comply; this my dear you will observe is by way of preface.

I told you in my *last* we were to have company to dinner that day, and likewise that my hair-dresser waited; the important task of dressing being over, I went to my cousin, and in the course of conversation asked her the names of the company who were to dine here.

“ Why

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“ Why indeed, my dear (said she) it is
“ a party I do not very well like. In
“ the first place there is Lady Catherine
“ Worthy; she is about fifty, and is an
“ old maid. She is a very good sort of
“ an old Dutchess to be sure; very mild
“ tempered, very humane and charitable
“ to the poor; and some will say she can
“ make herself as agreeable to a girl of
“ eighteen as to any one of her own age.
“ It may be so, but I cannot say I am
“ quite of their mind: now a hundred to
“ one but you and she are very intimate,
“ for you are that sort of young person
“ she likes. Then there is Sir Harry
“ Fletcher, who though not a young man,
“ is as great a beau, and as warm an ad-
“ mirer of our sex as any young fellow
“ in the kingdom. The third and last I
“ shall mention (as the rest are mere in-
“ significant) is Lady Bab Mellish. She
“ passes for six and twenty, though I will
“ swear she is as much past thirty. She
“ is

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“is agreeable to be sure, but affects a
“wit and vivacity that appears not easy.”

These, my dear, are the three principals. You may be sure I thanked Lady Mary for this obliging information; but had but just time so to do, when Lady Catherine Worthy was announced. Forgive me, my dear, if I digress here a few moments, just to say, that from the first sight of this lady, I am exceeding angry with myself for the sarcasms I have so often cast on old maids, and am certain from the portrait I shall draw of her (though to do justice to the original will be impossible) my Eliza will be charmed with her.

When her ladyship entered, I was struck with her fine figure; good humour and affability beams from her eyes, and a benignity, that captivates at first sight, is blended through her whole aspect. After she had paid her compliments to my cousin, (for the Countess was not come down

down) she turned to me, "Is this your
 "cousin, Lady Mary? (said she). Yes,
 "madam, (she returned). Give me leave
 "to present Lady Catherine Worthy to
 "you, Miss Watson." The good lady
 took my hand, and saluting me, hoped
 we should be better acquainted. I an-
 swered, the character my cousin had given
 of the amiable Lady Catherine made me
 impatient for that honour. The entrance
 of Lady Bab Mellish and Sir Harry
 Fletcher prevented a reply from her
 ladyship.

Lady Bab pretends to have taken a
 great fancy to me, as does Sir Harry;
 but they are both so disgusting, that had
 it not been for the conversation of Lady
 Catherine I should have been quite sick.
 Her Ladyship took an early leave, as she
 was going to a route. By the bye, we
 are engaged to one next Monday.

I asked Lady Mary yesterday, what
 was meant by a route? She answered,

it

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it is a number of people huddled together, who come merely to see and be seen; and in short, a full assembly is the most agreeable melange in nature. This is her description, and a very odd one it is. However next Monday I shall make my own observations, and pen them down for your perusal.

Lady Catherine, as I said above, left us early. She told the Countess and Lady Mary (not forgetting me) she hoped they would soon return her visit; which they promised to do. Sir Harry now absolutely grew so impertinently free, there was no enduring him; while Lady Catherine staid indeed he was under some restraint, as she don't spare him, and is called very severe, though I think not half severe enough. At nine he left us, which I was glad of, as it releaved me from his impertinence; but you must excuse my repeating his conversation, if so I might call it, as it consisted of some

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some flattery, too gross to be rehearsed. I scarce think it worth while to mention Lady Bab in any particular manner, as her conversation is merely small-talk, now and then interspersed with a scandalous anecdote, which very possibly is in great part, if not wholly, the fabrication of her own malicious brain.

My Eliza will think me severe, but she well knows the aversion I have to characters of her description.

I have been once to the play, which is an amusement you know I am particularly fond of. My sister asks me how I like my aunt and cousin? Indeed I can hardly yet judge. The Countess is a true woman of fashion, for she can behave with the same complacency to those she apparently dislikes, as to those she admires: I am certain from the little I have observed, she is often deceived by those she distinguishes as her favourites; for I think no bad person would find it
difficult

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difficult to impose on her ; though I have no doubt a worthy one, were they to set about it, would be attended to equally the same. In short, the goddess of fashion has so fast hold of her and her daughter, that it is impossible for them to attend to any thing else ; for how can they, or any of the beau monde, have time to think ? At breakfast they are studying how they shall spend their evening ; that grand point settled, what they shall put on. In short, every moment is employed, and all thought laid aside, as I must now my pen, for the watch is going past one o'clock. Adieu, my dear sister.

Yours,

ARABELLA WATSON.

LETTER

LETTER V.

ROBERT RIVERS, Esq. to the Right Hon.
LORD WIMBLETON.

MY LORD,

I Received your's, and am sorry to hear the badness of the summer has occasioned the loss of your fortune. How the duce, Henry, came you so overseen, to let those pests of society, called gamblers, trick you out of your money? I did not think, with all your vices, you were addicted to gaming; neither are you adept enough in what is now called *polite science*, to engage with a set of sharpers in any of our fashionable games. For what other title can you give them? Are there not a set of wretches lurking almost in every country town, where there is the least shadow of success, to catch the unwary? They have for their excuse and support, the examples of the great,

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great, who frequent gaming houses too much; and it is a great pity our men in power do not find a method to stop so pernicious a vice; but alas! it is owing in a great measure to them, that it has become so much the ton.

You talk of taking a wife to mend your estate, which I do not blame you for; but sure, Henry, you was jesting in what you have written, of keeping a mistress, and treating your wife with indifference. Fye! my friend, (though I am quite ashamed to own you as such); well may there be so many miserable couples, if the men all marry with your principles. But I will wave the subject, as I am apt to imagine what you wrote in your last was mere bagatelles. I should have been happy to have seen you in town; but my aversion is so great to that seat of dissipation and folly, that I am never so happy as when I quit it. At present here is diversion sufficient in the country. Our mornings

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mornings are spent in shooting or coursing; our evenings in social mirth, or agreeable conversation.

Brudenell and his wife have two daughters; the one a perfect Hebe, the other *assez bien*. Now if I thought you would be upon good behaviour, and not endeavour to draw either of these girls away, (for they are none of your forward town misses, I assure you) I would invite you hither, for there is no company; but if you think you cannot be out of mischief, stay where you are. Consider of this, and let me have your answer.

Yours,

R. RIVERS.

C

LETTER

LETTER VI.

Miss WATSON to Miss RICHINGFORD.

London.

LEST my dear Sophia should think I have forgot her, I sit down at this late, or rather early hour (it being past one in the morning) to scribble to your ladyship.

Would you believe it Sophia! though I have been but one week in London, I am almost sick of it. Lady Catherine Worthy is the only person I can with any justice admire. Here is a Lady Bab Mellish, who wishes to be very intimate with me, but I cannot endure her, as she seems never so easy as when she is detracting from the characters of her neighbours; she has (or at least thinks she has) many admirers; for few men I am told would chuse to venture on her (as her fortune is very small) for a wife.

She

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She is besides a very virago to her servants, and never so happy as when they are falling out. She has neither father nor mother, the latter of whom she lost when about twenty-three. Her conduct since (as in her mother's life time it was hard to know where to fix the blame) added to a very plain person, deters every man from thinking of her for a wife. I cannot say I think her so plain as some do, as she is a very good figure, being tall and genteely made. Her features to be sure will not bear examination, though as she dresses well, and uses a quantity of rouge, which greatly mends her complexion, she is, take her *tout ensemble*, not so despicable. In some companies she has an immoderate flow of spirits, but in others sits with all the uneasiness of a girl of fourteen just come from the boarding-school; or more properly speaking, like an old maid of fifty, who had quarrelled with all the world.

C 2

I think,

D

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I think, my dear, you know enough of me to be sensible such a character cannot please me.

Sir Harry Fletcher too is a person I cannot admire, though he takes great pains to recommend himself to me ; he is about thirty, and though it is not more than three years since he came to his estate, I am told it is nearly exhausted by gambling and keeping of mistresses. He fancies himself in love with every girl he sees, yet cannot prevail on himself to marry. By his very bad way of living, he is bringing old age fast on himself.

Thus having brought you to the end of the two *elegant characters*, I will put an end to my letter.

Your affectionate friend,

A. WATSON.

I shall write again next post.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

Miss WATSON to Miss RICHINGFORD.

ACCORDING to promise, I resume my pen. You ask me how I felt at parting with all my dearest friends at once? Indeed, my Sophia, but very so, so, particularly as my Eliza's face bore the strongest marks of regret at my leaving her. What her reasons are I know not, but certain it is that her spirits drooped the moment she heard I was going to town. As to envy it is as foreign to her breast as any species of vice: bred up in innocence of heart and purity of manners, she is not capable of doing a wrong action. Contrary to the present mode of relatives, we have tenderly loved each other from early infancy, nor never till that time, have known a week's separation.

I was at the play last night, and my feelings were severely tried at seeing Mrs.

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Siddons as Isabella. It may be truly said she felt the character. Her countenance, when she addresses her son, is inimitable. She is at present all the *ton*; for, would you believe it, it was with difficulty we procured a box, though we gave ten guineas for one! so prevalent is fashion, that no expense is spared to procure pleasure; and though it is the mode to leave your trades-people unpaid, you would be laughed at if you did not join in every expensive folly that is in vogue.

I am going this evening to Covent Garden to see the Castle of Andalusia, after that to a rout at the Countess of Hancorn's. Thus you see, for all I have said, I pursue pleasure with the same avidity as the rest of the *ton*.

I beg you will write soon, and depend on it you shall share my pen equally with my sister.

Yours, sincerely,

ARABELLA WATSON,

LETTER

LETTER VIII.

Miss ELIZA WATSON to her Sister.

Elm-Wood.

I RECEIVED my dear sister's welcome packet this morning while I was at breakfast. We all thank you for the description of Lady Worthy, and long to hear more of her ladyship. My papa desires me to ask you, if you have really no lovers yet, or if it is your bashfulness that hinders your speaking of them : this is our good papa's message. But now for a word or two of self.

Would you believe it Arabella ! although an hundred and twenty miles from the gay metropolis (to say nothing of the season of the year) I have acquired two new lovers. It is even so child ; but now for their little histories. You remember Dame Burton, my dear ; you recollect also, that she learns every body's history almost

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as soon as they enter the country. Last Sunday (this you know is Friday) Miss Fitter came and breakfasted with us, after which we went to church. We were rather early, and had scarcely seated ourselves, when the lively Emily^{*} whispered me, who, in the name of patience, are those two charming fellows opposite us? You may imagine I looked in hastily, when I beheld a pair of the most piercing black eyes, that seemed directing their whole artillery against my poor heart. They were both in regimentals. Two pretty fellows in red coats and cockades you know in a country church could not fail of raising the curiosity of all the young women. As for the two strangers, well was it for them they were blest with a good stock of assurance; for they were so stared at, I really pitied them, and therefore removed from their sight as much as possible, that I might not add to the interruption of their devotion; or
(shall

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(shall I be vain enough to say) that I seemed to engage their whole attention; for pity to them, however, and my fair neighbours joined to the above reason, induced me to move my seat, not that my curiosity was a bit less than the rest of the females; and I very readily acquiesced with Miss Fitter, who proposed calling on Dame Burton.

We found her just preparing her homely cloth, and content marked on her no less homely, but honest face. You know her chief characteristic is a blunt freedom, which she uses alike to the high as the low; though to the former, she can at proper times, shew humility and respect. You, my dear, know and regard her equally with myself, and now I have lost you, I frequently go and chat an hour, as her education and income placed her above the common cottagers. "But
" what's all this to the story, Eliza, cry
" you?" Very true, my dear, I confess

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my error, and will proceed. “ Good
 “ morrow to you, ladies. Now I warrant
 “ I know the reason why I am honoured
 “ with this visit ; the poor parson was lit-
 “ tle attended to this morning.” We both
 laughed, though we felt ourselves con-
 fused, but the good dame soon relieved
 us. “ You must know about a week
 “ ago, aye, (continued she, putting
 “ herself in a thoughtful attitude, with
 “ her left hand placed on her hip, and
 “ the fore-finger of her right stuck against
 “ her cheek) it was the last Monday that
 “ ever was, that a post chaise past my
 “ little hut here. I ran to my door, as
 “ was natural you know, ladies, when I
 “ saw it stop at farmer Hobson’s, and
 “ two main fine gentlemen in red coats
 “ got out of it ; you may guess, I won-
 “ dered a little at seeing such fine folk
 “ come to them (though to be sure it was
 “ no business of mine, but curiosity you
 “ know, ladies, is a prevailing fault with
 “ our

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“ our sex) but as I was saying, I deter-
“ mined to wait till somebody came out
“ of the farmer’s, when at last out comes
“ Tom, the plow-boy. So, Tom, says I,
“ what fine folks are those that are come
“ to your master’s to day ?” “ Why lord
“ a mercy, they be huge fine gemmen as
“ ever I seed ; and what’s more, they be
“ just come from the great city of Lon-
“ don ; they be to board and lodge, I
“ think they call it, with my measter,
“ says Tom. Well, how long are they to
“ stay ? How long ? why as long as they
“ likes, to be sure. And what are their
“ names ? Why I don’t know as yet,
“ though belike I’ve heard too, but I’ve let]
“ you know to-morrow.” My dear sister
must suspend her curiosity till the next
post, for the remainder, as the man calls
for this, and I have left but just room to
subscribe myself,

Your affectionate sister,

ELIZA WATSON.

C 6

LETTER

LETTER IX.

LORD WESTON to the Hon. JOHN HERVEY.

I Would not let the post go out, Jack, without writing a line to let you know how we are situated: I, -as well as my brother, am tolerably easy. The farmer and his wife are good sort of people; they have a daughter it seems, but she is out: so much the better perhaps.

We arrived here but yesterday, and last night our good hostess gave us a little description of the neighbourhood. If I was to give it in her own words, I should fill two sheets instead of one; therefore shall pen the substance.

There are three families, who are people of fortune; the rest are all farmers. The first to be mentioned is the Watsons. Their family consists of Mr. and Mrs. Watson, and two daughters; the

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the eldest of whom is gone to town with her mamma's sister, the Countess of Chorlebury. I mention this more particularly, Jack, as you are very intimate at the Countess's, (so were *we* once) therefore it behoves you not to mention our names, or own you know any person in these parts; for as it is more than probable we shall be acquainted in this family, who are styled "the glory and "pride of the country," it will be very natural for the youngest Miss Watson to mention two such smart fellows as we to her sister; therefore if you are not on your guard, it may bring on an explanation not at all to be wished by us for the present. But all this is needless to one with whose prudence we are so well acquainted. The next family is 'Squire Frampton's, who has two sons and a daughter: his wife is dead. He bears a tolerable good character; but nothing to compare with the Watsons. The
third

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third and last is Sir Simon Fitter's family ; but though a knight, his estate is not a quarter so good as the Watsons : he has a wife and one daughter.

Thus, Jack, have I told you as much as I know myself, for we have not shewn ourselves yet, neither shall we till Sunday, when we propose going to church. Ned and I are no longer brothers, but intimate friends ; we have likewise changed our names. I am Captain Farmborough, at your service ; and Ned Captain Westbury, equally devoted. You must direct for us by those names, at Farmer Hobson's, near Elm-Wood, Devon. Ah ! Jack, this cursed gambling, how many poor wretches does it ruin ? I dare say you have published the report of our being gone to the continent : how does it take ? I have often wished we had been in the army instead of the militia ; for though we should have stood a worse chance, for our lives, we should have saved

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saved our money. Write to us often, and let me know all the news you can. Have you seen Stanley yet? I long to hear what he will say to our scheme. Farewel.

Yours, &c. &c.

George Weston, *alias* Farmborough.

LETTER X.

Miss ELIZA WATSON to her Sister.

Elm-Wood.

DEAR SISTER,

WITHOUT farther ceremony I shall proceed with my narrative.

“ The next day (continued Dame Burton) I saw Tom again, who told me
“ they were both Captains; the one
“ named Farmborough, the other West-
“ bury. They told my measter they
“ wanted

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“ wanted to pass a quiet life, which they
 “ found impossible in London. This is
 “ all (added Tom) he could get out of
 “ them. They seem to be main good
 “ humoured gemmen, and pure merry.
 “ This, ladies, is all I can say about them,
 “ as I have scarce seen them since, till
 “ to-day at church.” We thanked her
 for her intelligence, and after parting
 with Miss Fitter, I went home and told
 papa and mamma what the old dame had
 related. Papa said if they were at
 church in the afternoon, he would ask
 them home to tea. In short, my dear,
 they came. Their conversation was
 agreeable and polite. As to Miss Fitter,
 who joined us at tea, she is quite in love
 with them, and says she don’t know
 which to prefer. But I’ll try and give
 you a description of them.

Captain Farmborough seems two or
 three years older than his friend; he is
 tall

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tall and well made ; rather thin. His eyes, are very dark, and are what you and I used to call speaking eyes ; his teeth are white and even. So much for person. His behaviour is polite, without the least tincture of foppery : he is at times very absent, and often sighs. Captain Westbury is a good deal like his friend. His conversation is agreeable, but his manners are a little bordering on the coxcomb. He seems to possess a much greater flow of spirits than his friend ; and take him *tout ensemble*, he is very well. They have been here several times : papa and mamma like them much. They are very gallant to me, each strives to please ; and I won't say that one of them don't succeed. But nothing has yet past in the lover way ; therefore, my dear, the beginning of my last was merely a brag.

I expected a letter from you to-day, but was disappointed ; hope to-morrow's
post

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post will bring me one. Adieu, my dear,
and believe me

Yours affectionately,

E. WATSON.

The Fitters and Framptons desire love
and compliments.

LETTER XI.

The Hon. JOHN HERVEY to ———
STANLY, Esq.

AS much as I hate writing, Stanly, I
have taken up my pen to give you
the promised account of our joint friends,
the Westons.

You know their too great propensity
to play; they engaged deeply with a set
of gamblers at ——— camp. The more
they lost, the more eager they pursued;
till they at last won about five thousand
pounds between them; determined to
play.

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play no more, and accordingly left the table. One of the company, a notorious sharper, whom you and I know, left it also, and after having prevailed on our young friends to drink pretty freely, persuaded them to return to the room to see how the rest went on. The players soon began to dispute who would win the game, the byestanders (except the Westons) betted; when he who seemed the greatest favourite of fortune, cried, what, Weston! will neither you nor your brother bet? Another whisper, George, if you bet in favour of Lord Raffle, (meaning the last speaker) you will stand a good chance of recovering what you have lost. In short, they consented, and joined Lord Raffle's party against Mr. Lowton. The stakes were doubled and trebled, when all of a sudden the fickle goddess whisked round to the other side of the table, and Lord Raffle, who just before

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before had thought himself such a winner, now found himself in debt nine thousand pounds.

By this revolution of fortune, the Westons found themselves not only stript of the paltry five thousand, but six more added to it. They were astonished, and could scarce believe their senses. The next morning, however, they were but too well convinced how vilely they had been duped. What to do they knew not; however, the money was called for; they gave a draft on their banker for part, and a bond for six thousand pounds more, which they were forced to borrow of a Jew, promising to pay the principal and interest in two years. I offered them the use of my purse, but they would not accept it. They appeared as easy as they could, and the camp soon after breaking up, came to town, afraid to tell their uncle, as you know their whole dependence

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dance is upon him. They knew he would not assist them, and therefore determined to retire into the country for a year or so, in order to retrieve their affairs; for as to ready money, they have none. As the estate of the elder is so small, and the allowance of the other cannot be touched till it becomes due, they desired leave of their uncle to take a trip to the continent, to which he consented, and moreover gave them four hundred pounds a piece, to defray travelling charges. This point settled, instead of preparing for the abovementioned trip, they desired me to write to a tenant of mine, near Axminster, to accommodate them with board and lodging. They then paid all their little debts, which, gaming ones excepted, did not amount to more than a hundred pounds, and then set off for farmer Hobson's, instead of crossing the sea, which all their friends believed.

I enclose

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I enclose a letter from George, which I have received since their departure. I can add no more.

Farewel.

J. HERVEY.

LETTER XII.

Miss RICHINGFORD to Miss WATSON.

Brompton.

I RECEIVED your two last letters together, as the first was mislaid at the post office; therefore take this as an answer to both. Upon honour, my dear, you seem quite initiated in the beau monde already; operas, plays, balls, and assemblies seem to employ your time; whilst I, heigh ho! am sequestered at this dreary season more than three hundred miles from the capital; immured with an old superannuated uncle, with now and then the

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the agreeable, spirited, elegant conversation of two or three antiquated virgins. Was ever any thing so horrible! I am absolutely weary of my existence, and if some *valiant knight* do not soon come to my relief, I shall die of the vapours. You have often wished, my dear, to know the reason of my uncle's bringing me here; as I am just at this instant rather in a scribbling vein, I will tell you.

I had the misfortune to lose my dear mamma when I was too young to be sensible of the loss I had sustained. My papa deeply afflicted at so soon being deprived of the object of his tenderest affection, determined to remain a widower for her sake, and place his whole care on me, who he has often said, am the exact resemblance of my dear mamma. When I was ten years old he placed me at boarding-school, thinking it more proper than taking a governess into the house. Here it was that my acquaintance first began
with

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with agreeable Arabella Watſon. When I was about fifteen, my papa took me from ſchool; but I had ſcarcely enjoyed his company two years, when I was deprived of him for ever. O my friend! (my tears will flow at the dreadful recollection) my heart ſtill bleeds at the remembrance of what he endured. For fix weeks he could take no nourishment but what was adminiſtered with a tea ſpoon. He ſent for his brother Sir Toby Richingford, and with his laſt breath conſigned me to his protection. To expreſs what I felt for ſome months after this dreadful cataſtrophe, is impoſſible. My uncle having ſettled my father's affairs, aſked me if I had any objection to paſſing a few months at his ſeat in the North? I answered in the negative; for at that time all places were alike. He accordingly brought me here, and though it is now two years that I have ſuſtained the above heavy loſs, he has never offered

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ferred to take me to any other place : I believe he means it all for my good ; as he has often declared to my dear papa, that the town was the worst place in the world for a young woman to be educated in ; and that with his will no girl should see London till she was married, when, if her husband chose to take her, he must abide the consequence. I have hitherto been patient, and should be so still, as I have a tolerable share of spirits, if he were not for ever recommending as a pattern those whom I most despise.

The neighbourhood is but small (at least the part where my uncle's house is situate). Here are three families whom the good Sir Toby allows me to visit; and when I have given you their several characters, I will leave you to judge, if I can with any propriety form an intimacy with either of them,

The first to be mentioned (as he ought to be the most respectable) is the Rev.

D

Mr.

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Mr. Niggard, (and a niggard he is in every sense of the word). He has a wife and one daughter. He is about forty-five; his face is well enough, only a little carbuncled or so, by the large bumpers of port and madeira he tosses off when at Richingford Abbey. He is very jocose, too jocose indeed for modest women to be in his company. His parishioners I believe would be better without him, as the morning service he gabbles too fast to be understood; and in the afternoon is ready to fall asleep. Thus you see, my dear, there is very little if any edification to be reaped from this worthy divine. His wife, were it not for her great volubility, would be an agreeable womna: I pity her greatly, as I believe her husband is a very bad man. She is continually out, in hope, I imagine, of finding that peace abroad she is unable to enjoy at home. There now only remains to mention Miss Niggard, but believe

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lieve me, my dear, that is the most difficult task. She is about twenty, and has a face not disagreeable, if she would let it alone. She paints both white and red, and when in company, the distortion of her features, with the horrible attitudes she throws herself into, renders her quite intolerable. She has a prodigious quantity of pride; and though she talks not a great deal, the little she does say is uttered in so conceited a tone, that it hurts you to hear her speak. Thus you see, my dear, that to copy from this young lady, would be to make myself worse than I already am.

The next to be mentioned are Miss Dinah Prue, Miss Deborah Turner, and Miss Martha Garthron. The first is about seven, the second five, and the third three and forty: these three ladies being all relatives, think proper to live together. I have a great mind to give you a description of them; but no, on second thoughts

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I find myself inadequate to the task: suffice it to say, they are ill-natured and churlish to the highest degree; never so happy as when detracting their neighbours, or ridiculing their (you would think) greatest favourites. They can't bear me, and are continually telling my uncle what an undutiful niece he has, and that I shall come to no good. Whenever we meet we are sure to quarrel, therefore I avoid them as much as possible.

The next are a farmer Ludlow, his wife, son, and daughter. They rent a farm of my uncle of about three hundred a year. The farmer is an honest, downright plain countryman, a good husband, and a good father; and perhaps does more real charity with the little he has to spare, than those who make a great parade.

Mrs. Ludlow is a very amiable woman; she has a great deal of wit without severity,

rity, and politeness without affectation. This latter qualification she has derived from reading, which she is very fond of, and has had a very genteel education, for she was the daughter of a gentleman in Worcestershire.

Miss Ludlow is a pretty agreeable girl, but is too young, (not quite fourteen) to form any intimacy with. Young Ludlow the son, is between nineteen and twenty; is agreeable, and not ill-bred.

You may judge, my dear, from the above description, that this last family is the only one with whom I can hold any (at least rational) converse. I often of an afternoon take a book with me to the Hermitage, and read to Mrs. Ludlow: this occasions great matter of conversation between Mrs. Niggard and her daughter, and the three virgins; as they are certain Mrs. Ludlow can do no good to any young person, her head is so stuffed with novels and romances, such

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fort of books being very improper for young ladies. I am sure, said Miss Prue the other day, "If I had a daughter, (and she drew up her long scraggy neck) "she should never look into any of those "filthy books, they only serve to give "young women a distaste for all useful "employments."

Thus, my dear, having given you an account of my neighbours, think if my situation can be the least agreeable. There is a very elegant house but a quarter of a mile from us, belonging to Sir Andrew Mead; but he has been abroad these two years, though before that time he always came here early in the spring with his lady.

This is rather a vapourish letter, but indeed I can't help it, for I am angry; I have not been able to walk out these two months, the weather has been so bad. I read very high encomiums on Mrs. Siddons in the newspapers, but I don't suppose

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suppose my wife uncle will ever let me come to town to see her.

Do, my dear girl, continue to write me all the news you can, as your letters are all the amusement I have. I am obliged to you for the character of Lady Bab Mellish, and heartily wish she was confined with the three old tabbies here for three months; they might then fight and scratch one against t'other. Farewel, my dear friend, and believe me

Yours sincerely,

SOPHIA RICHINGFORD.

LETTER XIII.

The Right Hon. LORD WIMBLETON
to R. RIVERS, Esq.

WHY, what the devil, Bob, possessed you to send *me* so lamentable an epistle as your last! I did not say I was totally ruined; far from it man. I was

D 4

not

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not so far overseen as your sagacious worship imagines; I took care they should not strip me of every shilling, as they did the poor Westons. You have heard of that affair, I dare say, Bob. By my soul I pity them: they are gone abroad to retrieve; though how the duce they intend to manage I cannot divine. However their uncle cannot live for ever, and as he knows nothing of this last adventure, he will have no occasion to alter his will. For he is such an odd *old don*, that if he knew they had lost their fortune by gaming (so great an antipathy has he to that polite science) he would, instead of leaving them his fortune to fetch them up again, strike them out of his will entirely. Hervey is their sincere friend, and a great favourite of the Earl; therefore whatever tale the old fellow may chance to hear of his nephews, he will strive to gloss it over. But enough of other people's affairs; let me return to my own.

own. What I said about a wife in my last, was at that time my sentiments; but since I have had reason to change them. I have seen a young lady, whom I think, *I think*, mind that, Bob, I could like well enough for a wife. She is tall and elegantly made; she has a very fair skin, though not absolutely alabaster; her eyes are black and piercing, without that boldness which too commonly is an attendant on a black eye. She has all that modest elegance of manners that must please a man of sense; and as *I* certainly am a very *sensible fellow*, I have taken a great fancy to Miss Watson, for that I am informed is her name. I am told likewise, she has a good fortune. She is at present on a visit to the Countess of Chorlebury, who is her aunt. This is all the information I can give you; my next perhaps may contain more particulars on the subject. My father presses me to marry, and very generously leaves

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me to my own choice ; therefore I determine to pursue Miss Watſon with the more ardour, as ſhe ſeems beſt calculated to fix

Your volatile, but ſincere friend,

HENRY WIMBLETON.

As to your invitation into the country at this time of the year, you may be ſure I ſhould not accept it, even if my thoughts were not occupied by the lovely Watſon.

LETTER XIV.

MISS WATSON to her Siſter.

Arlington-Street.

I Received my dear Eliza's welcome packet laſt Monday, and could delay no longer answering it, though it is now paſt twelve o'clock at night. I ought to make a good excuſe for letting above a week paſs without writing ; but as I have
the

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the vanity to think the sight of my superscription will make my peace, I will proceed without farther ceremony.

In the first place let me thank you for your description of the two beaux. You seem to be very particular in your portrait of Captain Farmborough : take care, my dear sister, you are not caught before you are aware. It is needless for me to remind you of the only failing almost of our father (a failing I must call it) as I am certain he would sacrifice his children's happiness to see them married to title and wealth. Excuse this impertinent advice, as by some it might be deemed, though I do not think it will be stiled so by my Eliza, from a sister she is confident loves her tenderly.

I believe I told you in my last I was going to a rout on the Monday following. I went, and soon had the pleasure of seeing Lady Worthy coming towards me, whom, through the confusion I was in at

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my first entering so large an assembly, I had not observed. She sat down by me, and soon entered into conversation with me in so easy and polite a manner, as quite charmed me. Most of the company were now engaged at cards. Her Ladyship never plays; and I having so pleasing a companion, declined them. She now with great good humour gave me a little account of the company then present; and as I think it will afford you and papa and mamma some little entertainment, will relate the conversation as precisely as possible in her ladyship's own words.

You may perhaps, my dear Miss Watson, think, in the account I am afraid I shall be obliged to give of some of them, I am troubled with a little old maidish spleen; but if you will take my word, I will rather diminish their faults than exaggerate them. The lady who sits at the table on your right-hand, in blue, is Lady Atom. It is now some years since she

lost

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lost her Lord: she was a true widow, and mourned his loss sincerely. Her friends at length drew her from solitude and sorrow, and brought her once more into company. She is of a haughty disposition, and neither in public nor private life, bears the best of characters. When in public, she seems all gaiety and cheerfulness, but at home her sullen disposition excites neither the love nor fear her domestics ought to bear to one of her condition. An austerity is visible in all her words and actions, and the knowledge she has of her own heart, often makes her think herself despised where she is most regarded.

The gentleman who sits opposite, is the Hon. Mr. Hervey. He lost his father about two years since, who left him in possession of a plentiful fortune, which he well deserves; the greatest felicity he enjoys being that of doing good: his money is mostly spent in acts of charity;

not

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not affected but real charity. He is a true friend to his king and country, and has (so many stile it) but one failing, "a too feeling and compassionate heart for the calamities and woes of his fellow-creatures."

The tall gentleman in green, is Mr. Hervey; a character exactly opposite. He has an immense fortune, which he chiefly lavishes on gamblers, and the loose part of our sex: he indeed makes himself agreeable to some women who are called sensible, but they must be those who admire the outside appearance, without wishing to look into the heart. He is coxcomb enough to think that every woman admires him, and that none for any length of time can resist him: such is his insufferable vanity. And in short, he is one that with my will should be excluded from every social and well disposed family.

The gentleman who sits on your left is Mr. Morell. He is to be pitied, though
a great

a great part of his uneasiness is owing to his own misery. His father was a man of property abroad, but on the troubles breaking out in America, he was forced to give up great part of it. He soon afterwards died, when the eldest son took possession of what estate there was, which is but trifling, as he has his mother's jointure (who is still living) to pay. The younger Mr. George Morell, whom you now see, was limited by those entrusted with his father's affairs, to a very small yearly stipend: small as it is, he is simple enough to keep a mistress. She is handsome, and he is very fond of her; and she has art and address enough to make him think she lives for him alone; though when his ruin is compleated, which I am afraid will not be long, she will find no difficulty (whatever she may pretend) in parting with him; when she will spare no art to ensnare some other silly fool, who

too late may have reason to repent his folly.

Mr. Morell I pity greatly, as excepting this one folly, I think, nay know him to be of a generous disposition. Sorrow I fear has taken fast hold of him, as he is much changed within this little while, and in his countenance endeavours to wear a chearfulness, which his heart is far from participating.

Lady Catherine had just finished this gentleman's character, who I assure I very much compassionate, when one entered the room, whom I must confess, I could not help taking particular notice of. He is tall and well made, and has an air in his deportment that cannot fail to attract. His eyes are dark and expressive. I could not suppress an inward curiosity that prompted me to ask her ladyship if she knew that gentleman; not forgetting though to thank her for the sketches she had already given me. She
smiled,

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smiled, saying, I am not personally acquainted with him; I know he is only son to the Earl of Wallbrook, who bears a very fine character. Whether his son, Lord Wimbleton, is as good, I know not; he is very handsome *you* see, and has the address to please the ladies, who in general, lavish very high encomiums on him. As to myself, I do not recollect ever speaking to him; I know he has been at ——— camp all the summer, and imagine he is just come to town, as this is the first place I have seen him in this winter.

I thanked her ladyship, though I believe with some confusion; which I am afraid did not escape her penetrating eyes; but to my great relief, my cousin at that moment came up, and rallied us not a little at our chusing to sit by ourselves in this remote corner of the room, as she called it, sequestered from all the world. Most of the card tables now breaking up,
severall

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several ladies joined Lady Catherine, when Lady Mary and I went in search of the Countess. I soon espied the handsome Wimbleton, as did my cousin, who instantly exclaimed, what a handsome fellow! who is he? Nay, cried I, do not you know? No, indeed; do tell me who he is. How in the name of wonder should I know? but to put you out of your pain, Lady Catherine tells me he is a Lord Wimbleton, and only son to the Earl of Wallbrook. O! I have heard of him; well he is an elegant wretch. Odd epithets, are they not, my dear sister? We now observed the Countess, who was talking to Mr. Hervey, one of the gentlemen whose character you have above. He spoke to Lady Mary in a familiar, though polite manner, and bowing to me, hoped to have the honour of my acquaintance. Lord Wimbleton just then passing, bowed to Mr. Hervey, and

and I thought seemed to observed me with attention.

“ O female vanity !” cry you. Right, my dear, perhaps it was mere vanity prompted me to think so ; but we have met since, and he has honoured me with more than ordinary complaisance. He has been here with a Mr. Beauclerk, who is very intimate with the Countess, and has introduced him as one of his particular friends. My aunt and cousin rally me not a little, telling me they are sure the man is dying for me. I am sure of it, cries the lively Mary this morning, for if he happens to come when you are not at home, he sets himself down, twirls either his hat or his cane (which ever is most convenient) and when I say, just by way of letting him know I am in the room, It is very cold this morning, my Lord. Yes, Madam, it is rather warm. Then seeing me stare ; cold, I mean. Starts up, leaves his compliments for you, and
is

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is out of the house in a moment. Ah! Arabella, the man is far gone, I will assure you. Thus does this lively girl run on. Hark! as I live, I hear his voice in the drawing-room! Lady Mary calls. Adieu,

My dear sister,

A. WATSON.

LETTER XV.

CAPTAIN FARMBOROUGH to JOHN
HERVEY, Esq.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THIS is the worst place we could have come to. This girl, this Eliza Watson, will totally overturn all my good purposes. For the first time in my life, Hervey, I love; and love too without the least prospect of a return. To be sure I have no reason to think she hates me, but far less have I reason to think she loves,

loves, nay even esteems me. It is true she honours me with more of her attention than many of the men who visit at her father's; but still I cannot bring myself to think she feels any tender sensation in her breast; though my brother would fain persuade me she does. If it was even as he says, could I offer her my hand till I have recovered the dilemma the vile gaming table has thrown me into. Many of my acquaintance would call me simple to stand upon these punctilios. Not so my friend Hervey, whose excellent advice I wished I had followed, and will in future strictly pursue. My brother, happy fellow! laughs at the blind god, and indeed every thing else. He is very easy under his present fictitious title, and declares he finds himself as happy under the title of Captain Westbury, as he did under that of Edward Weston. Alas! my friend, what signifies a title without an estate? My poor father found it a
difficult

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difficult matter to rub through ; and often wished he had been a private gentleman : so indeed have I. It is true we have great expectations from our uncle, yet such are his whimsies, that was he to take it in his head, he would not leave us a shilling. Nor should we have any great right to complain, as he was no relation of our father, and it is only by distant intermarriages that the title descends to me ; yet have we some right to expect his money with that title, as he has no relative. Then again, if he should take it in his head to marry ; for there are many women, my friend, who would not scruple to sacrifice themselves for a few years, for the sake of enjoying the noble fortune he possesses. Thus do I reason, and wonder, with so many obstacles before me, how I can think of addressing the lovely Eliza Watson. I, who for two years to come, cannot call myself scarcely possessed of a shilling. However, suppose
I had

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I had my income to receive, two thousand a year is too little to offer to a woman of her fortune; at least I should think so unless I was a private gentleman. In short, the more I think, the more I am bewildered; therefore adieu, my friend.

Yours, &c.

G. F.

LETTER XVI.

STANLEY, Esq. to CAPTAIN
WESTBURY.

I Scarce know how to bring myself to address you under your new title; for to tell you the truth, Ned, I don't like your scheme. You I do not so much fear, but your brother may meet with difficulties which he will not so easily overcome, You may imagine he has too much discretion to fall into any kind of error;

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error; I wish you may not find yourselves mistaken. Let me hear from you often; and be sure to keep up your brother's spirits; your own I am confident will never flag. As to self, I scarce know what to say; I am at present in as stupid a country, as stupid a house, and as stupid a humour as ever poor devil was in in the world. Sir Thomas Bell, at whose house I now am, is one of the greatest fox-hunters (one excepted, whom I shall mention in due time) in England, and never so easy as when in chase of the fox, and the hare. He is up at five in the morning, from which time his Lady never gets any rest till seven, when he sets off in pursuit of the chace, as the whole house resounds with tally ho! I pity his Lady much, as she is of a mild, gentle disposition; yet she bears with him patiently, and when she sits down to table, though sure to have her stomach turned by the fault he finds with the fare,
and

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and every thing else sits, "like patience
"on a monument smiling at grief."

She has but one daughter, and better
poor thing she had not that *one*, as she is
the exact counterpart of her father. As to
female delicacy she has none; she can
follow the chace with her father as
well as any fox-hunter in christendom.

You may be sure Lady Bell can have
very little, if any, comfort with such a
daughter. She is masculine to a degree;
she can swear like the first reprobate in
the land; she can bear as much wine as
some men, without the least effect; sings
a very good hunting song; and has often
declared, in my hearing, she would never
marry, unless it was one who was fond of
hunting and coursing; and as to children,
she never desires any, as she could not
bear the confinement of them.

This, Ned, methinks is enough to sicken
you of my descriptive talent; indeed I
shall not have patience much longer, as I

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have

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have hitherto been used to the most amiable part of the sex. To be sure Lady Bell is an agreeable woman, but as her temper is every day tried to the utmost, she avoids company as much as possible. I believe I shall go down into Cumberland with Sir Andrew Mead and his lady, though I am not sure I shall be much better off there, as they have a ward of Sir Andrew's with them, who, though quite different to Miss Bell, is as disagreeable in her way; as she is the fine lady in every point: she is only daughter to the late Earl of Fullerton. Lady Betty Bolton had but just attained her fifteenth year when she was deprived of the Earl her father, who left Sir Andrew Mead her guardian. He and his lady immediately proposed a trip to Paris, in order to divert her melancholy, which by the bye, I (and I believe every one else) thought not very apparent. They remained near two years abroad, on account

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count of the health of Lady Mead. They are now returned, and I am told Lady Betty is more affected than ever; but as I have received a very pressing invitation to attend him to his country-seat, where he proposes going early in March, I believe I shall accompany him. You will say he was determined to be time enough. Very true; but he knows he must be so with me, as I am always engaged the whole summer; however, I shall have time enough to consider, when if I am more pleasantly employed, I shall not attend them. Remember me to your brother, and let me hear from you often. Farewel.

Yours,

STANLEY.

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LETTER

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LETTER XVII.

JOHN HERVEY, Esq. to CAPTAIN
FARMBOROUGH.

INDEED, George, I sincerely pity you; for if Eliza Watson is but half as lovely as her sister Arabella, it is next to an impossibility for you to escape. Yet, my friend, shall I offer my advice, though almost certain it will not be taken. You must strive to conquer a passion, which from Mr. Watson's character, I am sure must be hopeless. You have been told all his good qualities, but none of his failings. He has a large share of pride, and will never consent to his daughter marrying any man unless possessed of a large estate: a title would be still more acceptable. Though the person who gave me this account asserts he has often heard him say, that a poor Lord should never marry one of his girls. Thus you see, my friend, there can be no chance, *at least*

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least at present, for you. A title it is true thou hast, but fortune thou hast none. Now I have three proposals to make.

The first is, to accept of what I have repeatedly offered you, the use of my purse; for what my friend are a few paltry thousands to me. Forgive me if I say your pride, in this instance, is ill-timed. Are we not friends? have we not been so from children? My fortune is large, so large indeed, I scarce know what to do with it. You will absolutely do me a charity in easing me of a burden; for a burden it absolutely is, and I again say what I have often said, *a man may be too rich, as well as too poor.*

My second proposal you will find rather rugged; it is to hasten to town; throw yourself at your uncle's feet, confess your errors, and implore his forgiveness. I will plead for you both; when I think, (yes I again repeat I think) he cannot but forgive you. To be sure he

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has such an implacable hatred to any species of gaming, that you run a great hazard. Now for my third and last, viz. to forget that ever such a woman as Eliza Watson existed. Nay, do not start, George! fly from the place you are in at present; pursue your former plan; and, if possible, be happy.

My first proposal leads to happiness; and the summit of the hill may be attained without either pain or trouble. The second is a kind of zigzag path, which at first may lead you to hope, than leave you in a maze; and possibly a few pebble stones may be scattered here and there, which may not alone hurt your feet, but corns, if corns you have, George, till it makes them bleed. The third is by far the most thorny; not alone thorns, but brambles and briars will obstruct your passage; and the more you try to avoid them, the more they will entangle you, till having reached
your

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your heart, they will either probe your wounds till they are healed, or inflame them till they end your sorrow.

Read, study well, and follow that road which is most conducive to your happiness. I am tired with writing, yet must add a few lines more. In the beginning of this I told you I had seen the elder Miss Watson. She is, without exception, the most elegant and beautiful woman I ever saw; unaffected modesty beams from her sparkling eyes; and the placid dignity of her whole carriage would lead you to think her more than mortal. The men must adore her; the women envy, yet admire her; whilst the boldest libertine must be awed in her presence. This mirror of charms will soon be married; and who do you think to? no other than our old college acquaintance, Harry Wimbleton. I hope he is worthy of her, though I am half afraid of him; but I would have you and Ned be on your

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guard,

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guard, as he talks of visiting Elm-Wood, to obtain Mr. Watfon's consent. Farewel, my friend, and believe me I am heartily tired.

Yours, &c.

J. HERVEY.

LETTER XVIII.

LORD WIMBLETON to R. RIVERS, Esq.

WILL you believe me, Bob, when I tell you that thy gay friend Henry Wimpleton is in a fair way to become that very domestic thing, a husband. It is even so my friend: I have offered myself to the lovely Arabella Watfon, and am accepted. In a few days I set off for Elm-Wood to ask her father's consent: the Countess of Chorlebury's I already

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ready have. I do not know what the devil ails me; but I feel an unaccountable something that tells me I am not worthy of this, to all appearance, more than woman. You cannot, Rivers, without seeing, frame a just conception of her beauteous form. Add to her person, a mind adorned with every grace and elegance imaginable, unfulled by the least tincture of vice. Now is it possible, I can be worthy such a woman? She loves me; yes, Rivers, I again repeat, she loves me. The modest joy which diffuses itself over her whole countenance at my approach, convinces me she does. My father is in raptures with her, and is in great haste; you may be sure I am the same. She wishes to have her parents and sister with her when she resigns her liberty. This is Monday, and I propose setting off on Wednesday for her father's, when I hope to prevail on them to set off

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for town immediately. Adieu, my friend,
I shall be glad to find you here at my
return from Elm-Wood.

Yours affectionately,

H. WIMBLETON.

LETTER XIX.

CAPTAIN WESTBURY to ———
STANLEY, Esq.

AND so, Stanley, you really think our
scheme a very ineligible one? Faith I don't know what to think myself;
this I know, that my brother, with all the
sageſſe you think him poſſeſſed of, has
been ſilly enough to fall in love. To be
ſure, it is with one whoſe very eyes plead
an excuſe for his folly; but I am certain
her friends will never conſent to the
match, if they even knew my brother's
rank in life, as he has ſo ſmall an eſtate.

She

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She is youngest daughter of Mr. Watson, and has a fortune of thirty thousand pounds. We are often there, as the whole family is very obliging to us, and the tell-tale eyes of Eliza always shew unusual joy at the approach of George. Now we might have overcome all our difficulties if this lad had kept himself out of Cupid's chain; but when once a man gets under his banner, all reason and prudence go to the devil. This is my opinion, dispute it if you can. Thus you see, instead of his thoughts being employed on mending his estate, and regaining his uncle's favour, he is contriving the best means of obtaining his goddess; yet not a syllable will he drop to let her know the adoration he has for her; no forsooth, that would be acting an ungenerous part, as perhaps he should never have in his power to offer her his hand with an estate adequate to her fortune. Thus does he go on tormenting

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himself.

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himself. But enough of this vapourish scribble.

Upon my soul, Stanley, you are to be pitied too as well as us; for by your description, you are in a strange family. Well, man, if you have a mind to take a journey *incog*, come here. Faith I wish I was among you, I should have rare diversion with the *female fox-hunter*. Devil take me if I would not as soon wed my grand-mother, if law would permit, as one of those *amazons*. For what, let me ask, can be worse under the sun, than to see the fairest flowers of the creation render themselves so very masculine?

Lady Betty Bolton I have had the honour of seeing, and think her every jot as bad (only in a different line) as Miss Bell. She has a pretty face, to be sure, but her pride, affectation, and ill-nature, entirely counterballance her perfections. This was my opinion of Lady Betty, before she lost her father; and if she has met

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met with any improvement by the tour to Italy I should wonder. We are just going to Mr. Watson's. Adieu for the present.

On our entrance, George was presented with a letter from Hervey, the contents of which will occasion us to fly. Lord Wimbleton is coming to Elm-Wood to obtain Mr. Watson's consent to marry his eldest daughter. What sort of a farewell will be taken of Miss Watson by my brother, the Lord knows! but as we must immediately prepare for our journey, I shall take my conge of you till our arrival in town.

Yours, &c.

EDWARD WESTBURY.

LETTER

LETTER XX.

Miss WATSON to Miss ELIZA WATSON.

YOU will receive this, my dear sister, by the hands of a man who aspires to be your brother.

I hope my dear papa, mamma; and sister will comply with my request, which is, to set off as soon as possible for town. You don't know, my Eliza, how much I stand in need of your presence; as I am so worried by all my friends here.

My cousin is in raptures at the thoughts of a wedding. My dear Lord Wimbleson vows if I will not fix the day myself, my friends shall do it for me. In short, every thing is in such a bustle, I scarce know what to do. I long to hear my dear Eliza's opinion of my intended; I have no sort of doubt but you will approve him, as our tastes have been always very much alike; and I will conclude with

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with this assurance, that he is the first, and will be the last that will ever have any share in the heart of

Your affectionate sister,

A. WATSON.

LETTER XXI.

CAPTAIN FARMBOROUGH to JOHN
HERVEY, Esq.

“**R**EAD, study well, and follow that
“road which is most conducive to
“happiness.” This is the advice of him
whom of all others I have singled out as
my friend.

O! Hervey, Hervey, what have I not
suffered since the receipt of your last!
but to be a little more methodical. I
was just returned from Mr. Watson’s
when your truly friendly letter was put
into

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into my hands : I read it with the attention it deserved.

Your first proposition, as you kindly say, leads to happiness ; but my pride will not let me be a burden to my friend, though that friend is a Hervey. The second indeed is rather in the zigzag order, and may (as you humorously add) hurt my corns, but at the same time is the properest to be pursued. As to the last, I hope it is not quite so bad as you imagine ; though heaven knows the difficulty I have this day gone through ! You will not be surprised when I tell you, I have taken leave of Miss Watson, *horrid thought !* perhaps for ever.

What you told me of Wimbleton's coming down, alarmed me ; I therefore went to Mr. Watson's the next day with a full determination to take, perhaps, a lasting farewell of the lovely Eliza. When I entered the parlour, scarce was I able, so much was I agitated, to answer the enquires

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enquires after my health, by all present. My dear brother Ned helped me out with his agreeable vivacity, which at length enabled me to tell them, I was going to leave this place. Oh! Hervey, what were my sensations, when looking on the face of my sweet Eliza, I beheld it as pale as ashes! She took out a handkerchief, and by a pretended cough, soon brought a suffusion of crimson over her charming face. Mr. Watson, with great politeness, said he was sorry he should so soon lose me; at the same time adding, To what part are you going? I was rather puzzled, but answered with as little hesitation as possible, Towards the north; not judging it proper to tell him I was going to London. He then turned to my brother: Do you, Captain Westbury, accompany your friend? Part of the way, rejoined Ned, I believe I shall, sir.

These,

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These, Hervey, are the heads of our conversation; and it was with some pleasure mixed with pain, that I observed a total stop to all Miss Watson's vivacity. Well was it for her we were not left alone, as I am afraid I should have found it impossible to restrain my tongue; for rather would I have her think me insensible to her charms, than involve her (if my present scheme does not take) in, perhaps, everlasting wretchedness. If she at present loves me (which I must own from some appearance I am prompted to believe) she may by thinking she is indifferent to me, get the better of her regard for me, and marry some far more deserving man, who will make her happy; for I cannot hold with too many of my sex, who endeavour to gain the affections of an amiable, and perhaps inexperienced woman, when they either plunge them into woe irretrievable, or leave them a prey to hopeless love. No, rather

rather let Eliza, I again repeat, think me insensible to her charms, than occasion her to make some rash vow, never to be another's, by owning my passion for her.

Ned will accompany me to my uncle; 'spight of all I can say to the contrary; for why should he suffer with me? He laughs at me, and says that my doleful looks will never soften my uncle's resentment; he has such spirits he scarce minds any thing. The picture you draw of the elder Miss Watson makes me afraid the gay Wimbleton is scarce deserving of so much excellence; but by what you say of her, she may reform him. I must contrive to see her while in town; for you know while there, I must resume my title, therefore in case her lovely sister has mentioned me, she can have no suspicion of my being Captain Farmborough. I shall dispatch this to-night. This is Monday; I shall set off in a post chaise for town; when perhaps the only pleasure

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pleasure I shall receive, will be that of embracing my friend. If Stanley is in town, pray remember me to him. Farewel.

Yours,

G. F.

LETTER XXII.

Miss ELIZA to Miss WATSON.

I RECEIVED my dear sister's letter this morning, by the hands of Lord Wimbleton, who, by his appearance, seems to deserve you. We all like him very much. I really believe he doats on you; for when he speaks of you, it is with an enthusiastic rapture. If his heart and disposition are but half as amiable as his person is handsome, I will venture to say he deserves my Arabella; for I think, except Capt. Farmborough, I never

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I never beheld one more striking. Apropos of Capt. Farmborough; he and his friend have left this part of the country already; to the regret of a great many I believe. They took leave of us last Monday. Capt. Westbury wished us our health with his usual vivacity; but the elegant Farmborough seemed scarce able to utter a syllable. His friend, indeed, apologized for him, by saying he had the head-ach.

He thanked my father and mother for their obliging behaviour to him: he then turned to me, took my hands between both his, and pressing them with an energy, not to be described, attempted to speak, but in vain: he therefore let them go, and with a low bow left the room.

Both papa and mamma said his behaviour was odd. I, for my part, went to my room as soon as possible, to hide a chagrin I could not suppress. Forgive me,

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me, my Arabella, for thus troubling you with my complaints. Too well I know I must conquer a passion that forebodes nothing but anguish; besides, am I not indelicate to confess a passion for a man I know so little of? A man too, who has never in word or action given me reason to think he thought more of me than another. I am really ashamed of myself, and am determined to get the better of my weakness. Adieu then to this subject, and likewise to my sister, as the sound of the dinner-bell obliges me to leave you for the present.

Eleven at Night.

Positively, Arabella, I am almost in love with this said Lord of yours; and well for you that he insists on leaving us to-morrow; for his impatience to behold you again will not let him stay to accompany us, though we have promised it shall be
the

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the beginning of next week. I therefore am forced to sit down and finish my letter to-night, as his Lordship will present it to your fair hands, which, I hope, will make up for any deficiency it may contain. Adieu, my dear, and that every happiness may attend you, is the sincere wish of

Yours affectionately,
E. WATSON.

LETTER XXIII.

Miss WATSON to her Sister.

THANKS to my dear Eliza for her last favour, which I received from the hands of my dear Wimbleton. He is very full of your praises. I long very much to see you, and wish you had been here the other day: the day before my Lord came to town. Mr. Hervey, whom I dare say you remember, called, and with him came Lord Weston, one of the handsomest

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fonest men, except my Wimbleton, I
 ever saw. I again repeat, I wish you
 had been here, for in spite of Farmbo-
 rough, you must have given the palm to
 Weston. Now don't put up your lip,
 and say, it is easy for you to talk, having
 the man of your choice. Indeed my love
 it is very true; I am afraid your Arabella
 would have found it very hard to have
 erased Wimbleton from her heart; but
 consider, my sweet love, the many obsta-
 cles that lay between you and Farmbo-
 rough; obstacles which I am afraid can
 never be overcome. Besides, my love, as
 you justly observe, you can have no
 ground to think the Captain preferred
 you to any other. What little gallantry
 he has shewn to you in preference to the
 other females of your acquaintance, the
 superiority of your understanding, to say
 nothing of your person, demands it; be-
 sides, those sons of mars are seldom to be
 depended on, as perhaps at the very
 instant,

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instant they are swearing to one, they love her more than life, another engrosses their thoughts; and so they continue swearing what they never intend to perform, to a whole herd of unthinking females, who listen with a too earnest attention to the volubility of their tongues. The smart cockade and shoulder knot are to some irresistible, though at present, indeed I believe they are not so dangerous, as the streets as well as houses abound with them; for every mechanic who can purchase a commission for his son, thinks it much better than bringing him up to trade, not considering the acquaintance he must unavoidably make with the rich, gay, and thoughtless of his profession, will render him unfit for business at the expiration of the war. To be sure, some few have the good fortune to get preferred through their merit, or the interest of those they are recommended to. But is it not hard that a boy

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who

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who entered the army but yesterday, should be set over those, who, perhaps, have served their king and country for years, without finding themselves a step higher than at their first entrance? But forgive me, my Eliza, for thus troubling you with my reflections; indeed I cannot help it, for you daily see, or hear some instance of merit being trod under foot, and roguery, knavery, and all kinds of debauchery encouraged; nay, even practised by those who ought to punish them. I have now entirely lost the thread I begun with, nor shall I resume it; as your own good judgment will prevent your falling into errors, which may occasion your remorse afterwards.

Lady Catherine Worthy longs to be introduced to you, and will herself undertake, provided you will permit her, she obligingly says, to conduct you through the mazes, this sad, sad city abounds with. I hope to have an answer

to

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to this from you in person, when my dear sister may assure herself of my trying every method to raise her spirits, which from her two or three last letters, I have reason to think are very much depressed. Adieu.

A. WATSON.

LETTER XXIV.

LORD WESTON to ——— STANLEY, Esq.

THE interview is over, Stanley, and I have not only involved myself, I am afraid, in everlasting ruin, but my unhappy brother likewise. My uncle has forbidden us both the house. The generous Hervey, spite of all I can say, executes himself as the occasion of this fresh misfortune. As to Ned, he laughs at us both, swearing he will not leave us a moment, as he humorously adds, he expects to hear one has drowned himself,

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and to find the other, (meaning me) dangling in his garters. Happy fellow! nothing affects him. But I will try to give you some account of our proceedings; but here comes Ned, who insists on giving you the account himself; he takes the pen from me.

And very much obliged to me I dare say Stanley is, for freeing him from such a doleful ditty as my wife brother was going to favour him with. Faith, Stanley, I am almost tempted to think them a couple of whimpering girls. Here sits Hervey, cursing his fate for persuading his friend to acquaint our devil of an uncle with our misfortunes. A little further sits George, who is trying all in his power to stop the torrent of invectives he so freely pours on himself; whilst I, seated at a convenient distance, for fear they should infect me, laugh heartily at both. Thus, Stanley, are we situated; but now for the promised account.

We

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We arrived in town last Friday, where Hervey received us with open arms, though his countenance betrayed distress. My brother asked him if he had seen the Earl? Hervey answered, yes. He then told us (as I intend being brief as possible) that he had acquainted him that we were not gone abroad, but had retired into the country, in order to retrieve a considerable loss we had sustained, being led into too deep play at camp. The old fellow stood amazed at Hervey's harangue, as well he might, not thinking his hopeful nephews would engage in any such science. He flew into a violent passion; saying, he would never see, or own us more. Our good friend pleaded in vain, and he was forced to return home a full inch lower than when he set out. However, notwithstanding his menaces, we the next morning, accompanied by Hervey, ventured to St. James's Square, and were immediately admitted. This, I in

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my wife head, took for a good omen, as I thought perhaps he might be denied to us. The servant shewed us into the study where the noble Earl was, but on hearing our names announced, he started, as if he had received a stroke of electricity from a certain doctor. A sudden gloom overspread his countenance, and with a supercilious air, and distant bow, he desired to know our commands. My brother and I advanced, and each bending a knee to the ground, begged his forgiveness for an error we were led into by a set of wretches who were bent on our ruin. We paused; when he with great dignity said, I am amazed, Mr. Hervey, after what passed yesterday, you should suffer these young men to appear before me; then turning to us, rise, gentlemen, (said he) I am no longer entitled to your obedience, I find. Hold! (observing me going to speak) I certainly am not, or you never
would

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would have plunged into a vice, which you know was my utter abhorrence. I gave you warning enough, as the whole world is sensible of my detestation of it, and I solemnly assure you, I will never leave my fortune to those who are addicted to this, to me at least, worst of vices. I wish you well, but do not by forcing yourselves into my presence, think to subdue my anger, as you may by that means force me to make a rash vow that I can never recal. He then left the room. Poor George, seemed petrified; but as to myself, assuming more courage, I followed my uncle, at the same time beckoning Hervey. This, you will say, was a bold stroke, and I had reason to think so; for on turning round, and seeing me after him, he with a stern brow, bid me be gone. I, however, still ventured his anger, and pleaded my brother's cause with all the rhetoric I was master of; at the

same time telling him that he had become acquainted with a young lady, whose beauty of mind and person, together with a large fortune, would entitle her to one of the best matches in the kingdom.

And so, answered the old don, he has thought proper to fall in love? Yes, faith, I believe a large fortune would be very acceptable to him just now, but it shall be my care, if she is a deserving girl, she shall not be drawn in by a gambler. I assured him, with some warmth, he wronged him, since so far from drawing her in, he had not made his passion known; nay, more, had concealed his rank from her. Enough, rash boy, (angrily interrupting me) returned the old Earl, be gone this moment, nor ever dare enter these doors again. And as to you, Mr. Hervey, (for he at intervals pleaded for us both) I should not have thought you guilty of such imprudence: it is true, young as
you

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you are, I have always considered you as a friend, but that is no rule you should in this point so openly condemn the conduct of a man, old enough to be your father, and unless you think proper to drop this subject, my doors shall be shut against you. And you, sir, inform your brother; as I now inform you, that I shall henceforth entirely forget I have such belonging to me. Adieu, drop all evil courses, and fortune may perhaps not forsake you, but from me you have nothing to expect. His manner of delivering this speech convinced me I had nothing to hope, and therefore, with a respectful bow I left the room.

Now, Stanley, what do you think of this old fellow? My thoughts are, that he will in time repent of the part he has acted towards us; but my wife brother, and his no less wise friend, will not think any such thing; but in the worst of troubles, hope supports me. Nothing would

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serve George, when he came to town, but he must go to see the elder Miss Watson. Hervey accordingly took him, and he returned in such raptures, that it is hard to say which sister he likes best.

We have fixed on no plan yet for our future support; as soon as it is settled, I will let you know, till then, farewell.

EDWARD WESTON.

LETTER XXV.

Miss WATSON to Miss RICHINGFORD.

DO not start, my dear Sophia, when I tell you, that perhaps this is the last letter you will receive from Arabella Watson: Would you believe it, child, I am going to be married! Methinks I see your surprise, but it is really so. I am afraid you will think me very precipitate: indeed I think so too, but I am
so

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so hurried, I don't know what to do. You are impatient to know who he is? He is a Lord Wimbleton, and only son to the Earl of Wallbrook; his lordship has set off for Elm-Wood, to bring my papa, mamma, and sister to town, and I expect him this evening.

Now let me acknowledge your last favour. Indeed, my sweet friend, I pity you much, as your situation must be very disagreeable with the set you have described. I wish you could prevail with your uncle to let you come to town to be present at a certain approaching occasion. Do, my dear, try to persuade him; but you must set off immediately, tell him, or you will be too late. For my part, I shall not fix the day till I have an answer from you. Lady Mary Manly is in raptures at the thoughts of a wedding, and is continually worrying me to fix the day. Lord Wimbleton is just

F 6 alighted

alighted at the door; I am sure my Sophia will excuse me for the present.

Eleven at night.

I shall have all my friends here but one, on Friday, if no cross accident intervenes. My Lord presented me with a letter from my sister. I long to see her, as I am afraid she is not what she used to be. You never saw her, my dear, though I hope the pleasure I shall take in presenting you to each other, will not be denied me long. She has seen a gentleman at Elm-Wood, who has made too great an impression on her tender heart; by her description, (for I have not seen him) he must be very handsome; but his rank in life (only a Captain in the militia) will never let my father consent to his having his daughter; not that the Captain has ever spoke of love to my sister; though as great a novice as I am,
by

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by what she has said in her letters, I do not think she is indifferent to him. The supper-bell rings, therefore must conclude with reminding you, every body waits with impatience for your answer to this, which believe me will be much more acceptable to me if in person.

Yours sincerely,

A. WATSON.

LETTER XXVI.

Miss RICHINGFORD to Miss WATSON.

Richingford Abbey.

AND so you are really going to be married! Well, my beloved friend, assure yourself I wish you all imaginable happiness with this said Lord Wimbleton; and believe me, I suffer not a little mortification at being deprived of the pleasure of seeing you before you resign your liberty.

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liberty. I begged, prayed, scolded, and flouted, all in a breath; but all to no purpose, for Sir Toby swore I should not stir an inch. Upon honor I had almost a good mind to have scaled the garden wall, only I thought it was as well to stay till I had some knight-errant to receive me on the other side.

I received yours but this morning, though would not delay sending an answer immediately, for fear of being condemned to lead apes, by having prevented your fixing the day. I could almost cry for vexation, but it does not signify.

I have neither time nor spirits to write a long letter, or to answer yours particularly, any farther than to say how much I pity your sister, as I do all poor damsels in love; though I thank heaven that sorrow is as yet unknown to me. Adieu, my dear; let me hear from you soon.

Your sincere friend,

SOPHIA RICHINGFORD.

LETTER

LETTER XXVII.

Miss E. WATSON to Miss NEWTON.

London.

WE arrived in this gay metropolis about three hours ago, and were received by my sister, aunt, and cousin, with all imaginable pleasure; and were scarce seated before we were joined by Lord Wimbleton. Every one seemed gay but your Eliza. It was in vain I tried to rouse myself; a weight hung on my spirits, which I could not overcome, and I was forced to plead fatigue, as an excuse for retiring. My amiable sister, more lovely if possible than ever, accompanied me to my apartment, and tried every effort in her power to erase the visible dejection of my mind. Shall I confess, my Harriot, she tried in vain; and will you not call me ungrateful, when I add, I was glad when she wished me a

bon

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bon repos? I immediately dismissed my maid; when, instead of courting my downy pillow, I sat down to comply with your request of writing as soon as I arrived in this dissipated city. I fancy all my friends think me wrapt in the arms of Morpheus; but on the contrary, there seems an enmity between me and the drowsy god.

Oh! my friend, where is now the charming Farmborough! Forgive me, my dear; after this night I will endeavour to forget such an one exists. But to confess the whole; Lord Wimbleon's entrance (he was dressed en militaire; and at that moment I thought it Farmborough himself) threw me into such a confusion, that I was almost insensible to what was either said or done. Assure yourself, however, I will no more trouble you about him; no, I will call pride to my aid, and forget one who perhaps at
this

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this moment scarce thinks such an one as Eliza Watson exists. I will now wish you good night, and try to recruit my weary spirits for the morrow, when I am to be introduced to half the world. Adieu.

IN CONTINUATION.

Twelve at Night.

I find it utterly impossible to think of writing but when I am retired for the night, I will therefore finish and seal this now, in order to send it off in the morning.

I have been introduced to Lady Worthy, who merits more, if possible; than my sister has said of her. I already have the honor of being ranked among her ladyship's favourites; the rest of the company I shall say nothing of, as the men were insipid fops; the women insignificant flirts. In the evening Lady Mary Manly, my sister, Lord Wimpleton, and your humble servant, went to the

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the play. It was *The School for Scandal*, and the characters of Lady Teazle and Charles Surface were inimitably performed by Mrs. Abington and Mr. Smith. It is an excellent comedy, and though severe, is I fear too just a picture of the times. It was a crowded audience. Having brought you to the end of the play, my dear, you are likewise at the end of my letter, and so good night.

E. WATSON.

LETTER XXVIII.

LORD WESTON to ——— STANLEY, Esq.

I Have seen her! Stanley, and if I have any regard for my future peace, it must be for the last time. My brother dragged Hervey and me to the play; we took our seats in the front boxes. But good heavens! what were my emotions, when casting my eyes towards the right-hand stage box, I beheld the lovely Eliza Watson,

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Watson, and her no less lovely sister !
I told my companions ; when Ned and
I retired behind some ladies, for fear of
their observing us ; for Wimbleton was
with them, and I knew if he saw us we
should instantly be discovered.

Scarce could I restrain myself from
going to speak to her, but prudence
forbade me ; and I am determined to
leave England without seeing her. Yes,
Stanley, Ned and self are determined to
go volunteers to America, where a friend-
ly bullet may put an end to all my cares.

The generous Hervey is trying all his
interest with General ——— to procure
a captain's commission for me, as likewise
a lieutenancy for Ned. I am very in-
different, I must say, what station I go in,
but the zealous friendship of Hervey
knows no bounds.

My heart is in struggle with my reason,
whether I ought to see or write to Miss
Watson before I leave this country for
ever,

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ever, to tell her of my love. Under a fictitious name it would certainly be wrong, and I do not choose to inform her of my real rank in life, for many reasons. Besides, why should I try to engage the affections of so amiable a woman, when I am almost certain I shall never have it in my power to offer her my hand with propriety? No, I will trust to fate. Here comes Hervey, big with some important news, I am sure!

Generous fellow! he has this moment presented me with a captain's commission, and my brother with a lieutenancy. We are to set out immediately to join the regiment, which is quartered at ———, and is to be sent to America early in the spring. Hervey has promised to inform me of every thing relating to my charmer; and I shall regularly write to him and you. At present I must bid you farewell, to prepare with all expedition for my journey.

Yours,

WESTON.

LETTER XXIX.

MISS WATSON to MISS RICHINGFORD.

TO express my disappointment at the receipt of your last, I find impossible. Heaven forbid all the bad things we have wished your uncle, should come to pass, as I am afraid my sweet friend would suffer for it; however, my love, keep up your spirits, and never despair. As for Lord Wimbleton, he was for setting off to storm the castle, and force you away.

I had the pleasure of embracing my dear friends last night, but could not help a pang at seeing the altered countenance of my Eliza; she looks considerably thinner than when I left Elm-Wood. She assures me she is well in health, but I cannot think so. I am certain she will be greatly admired when she appears in public, for though the roses are fled, the lillies

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lillies become her so well, she looks like an angel.

I tremble for her, as she cannot long escape the attention of the men; and I am afraid her heart is too far gone to be recalled; but I am determined to let no disagreeable thoughts intrude upon me at present, as my spirits are apt to sink at the thoughts of an approaching occasion. Is it any wonder, my Sophia; is it not a slippery path? How can I be sure that no cross accident may intervene to interrupt our mutual happiness? Though many unhappy marriages that have lately taken place, makes me almost tremble, yet do I think Lord Wimbleton's heart all my own at present, and I shall certainly try to keep it.

I find it impossible to begin any other subject now, therefore will, I believe for the last time, subscribe myself

Yours affectionately,

ARABELLA WATSON.

LETTER

LETTER XXX.

— STANLEY, Esq. to LORD WESTON.

I Received yours, and am sorry you are in so disponding a situation. For heavens sake ! rouse yourself, my friend, don't let the man sink into the whining lover ! It is true, severe have been your trials lately, but patience may effect miracles. Be guided by Ned, who I am certain will do all in his power to amuse and divert your melancholy thoughts. You will meet with amusements sufficient where you are going. As to your American expedition, I think it will not take place, as a peace here is at least talked of as certain ; but I think your uncle will relent, and soon recal you.

I suppose you will write to Hervey as often as any thing material occurs. I believe I shall go to town next month for a fortnight or three weeks, when I shall
visit

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visit my brother, Lord Scamper, whom I have not seen since his marriage with Lady Frances Pattle. He and I are of such different tempers, that we never agreed, therefore I suppose I shall not stay long. The rest of this sheet I shall dedicate to Ned.

Yours,

STANLEY.

According to the rule of right, Ned, I believe your letter ought to have been answered first, as it was first received. I am sorry on your account, but more on your brother's, your uncle treated you so cavalierly. I commend your conduct much in trying to soften the Earl's resentment against your brother, as you may now contentedly sit down with the knowledge of having done your duty. Above all things keep up George's spirits; force him into company, but let it be prudently

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dently ; and whatever you do, keep clear of that cursed vice gaming ; for if ever your uncle again hears you have taken to cards, you may be sure he will for ever discard you. This advice is needless, I am certain, as your own good sense will keep you from an error, you have but too severely suffered by ; but I am certain you will excuse the zeal of an old friend, who has your welfare near at heart.

Sir Thomas and his daughter still continue their usual course, though poor Lady Bell has been ill for this week past. As I shall be in town so soon, I think I shall stand a chance of seeing you before your departure for G——. I am just summoned to tea.

Yours, as usual,

STANLEY.

G

LETTER

LETTER XXXI.

Miss E. WATSON to Miss NEWTON:

I Again take up my pen, though totally at a loss for subject to exercise it upon.

All here is bustle and confusion, and I can assure you that my spirits are in a great measure returned to their wonted pitch: it would be strange indeed if they were not, for each of my friends do all in their power to amuse me. Our dear Arabella comes out with a heigh oh! every now and then, at the thought of an approaching ceremony. This morning at breakfast, she heaved a gentle sigh, when Lady Mary, who sat next her, turned round:

“ My dear, I hope you don’t repent ?
“ speak, child, before it is too late.”
“ Repent of what, my dear ?” “ Why at
“ having consented to be married, to be
“ sure.

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“sure. And as to you, my Lord, sooner
“than you should go without a wife, you
“shall have me.”

We all laughed at her, but the entrance
of company hindered a reply. She is a
very good girl, I believe, but rather
giddy.

Tuesday is the day my dear sister re-
signs her liberty, and I fancy till that day
is over, I shall find no time for writing.
My papa and mamma have consented to
spend the rest of the winter in town; but
indeed, my dear, I had rather return to
Elm-Wood. My cousin tells me I am
a sad insipid companion, for I am even
worse than my sister. The highest pleasure
I shall enjoy while in town, will be the
conversation of Lady Worthy, who ho-
nours me with a great share of her esteem.
She is a most amiable woman indeed, and
is worthy my utmost regard.

I have seen the Mr. Hervey, the per-
son my sister mentions in one of the let-

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ters I shewed you; he seems very agreeable, and paid me so much attention, that my friends have not ceased to rally me ever since.

Heaven forbid there should be any reason for their raillery! as the acquisition of a lover, which would to so many be agreeable, would be the greatest evil that could befall

Your

ELIZA WATSON.

LETTER XXXII.

LADY MARY MANLY to Miss TALMASH.

UPON honour, Ethelinda, thou art the most unreasonable being breathing, to insist, as you do, on a letter from my own fair hand. How can you imagine that I, surrounded as I am with all the bewitching amusements of this dear, delicious town, can find time to sit down

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down and write to a country girl? You have heard that my fair cousin Arabella is going to be married to Lord Wimbles-ton, and that her sister is come to be present at the ceremony; all that is very true, child: though how in the name of wonder did you hear it?

I assure you I am almost tempted to pull caps with my cousin for her intended; but I am afraid it is too late; therefore she shall go to church in peace and quietness, for I really believe the poor thing loves him; and more than that, *he* loves her. Now it would be a charity to part them; for it is so derogatory to the system of this great world, that two persons should be joined together in holy matrimony, who love each other, that it will certainly furnish the town with talk for a month. Heavens! that a cousin of mine should be so outre! Here she is, I declare. Ah, child! I am writing about you; though, if it was

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not for my having put on a good share of rouge this morning, I should absolutely blush. I have scribbled a whole side already, and my good cousin tells me nothing to the purpose. Why, my dear, the girl knows I hate writing. Ah! Sir Simon below! *O le mignon!* I will not write another stroke.

Adieu, my dear girl, and believe me, in spite of all this flippant stuff,

Your sincere friend,

M. MANLY.

For fear you should think this Sir Simon a lover, it is necessary to tell you, he is on the verge of seventy.

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LETTER XXXIII.

Miss RICHINGFORD to Miss WATSON.

Richingford-Abbey.

UNCERTAIN as I am whether such an one as Arabella Watson now exists, I had half a mind not to write; for you don't so much as tell me in your last doleful epistle, the day fixed on for your changing your condition. For heaven's sake! child, what could possess you to write your last in such a *penferoso* style?

My good uncle Sir Toby is still the same good-humoured soul as ever; never easy but when he is lecturing me on my too great vivacity. "Sophia, Sophia!" (cried he, the other morning) what will "your vivacity bring you to, child?" "No harm, my good sir, I hope." "Ay, but I am afraid it will, for you do not consider the character you have got here."

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Miss Prue said the other day, she was certain, were it not for my watchful care, you would have run away a twelve-month ago. Then again, Miss Turner assured me, she saw you the other day walking across the field at the bottom of the park, leaning on the arm of young Ludlow; and I will not allow you to hold any converse, Sophia, with any of the young fellows hereabouts, as I will steadily adhere to the promise I gave your father.

Dear sir, said I, I know it perfectly well, that my dear papa recommended me very particularly to your care. I have no one to converse with here that is the least tolerable, beside the Ludlows; but I hope I have more prudence than to be guilty of so rash an action as running away with a farmer's son. As to what Miss, or rather Mrs. Prue and Turner say, I care not a fiddle-stick, as I am certain it is only spite and envy

at

at my meeting with a little more complaisance (though only from a country clown) than themselves; not considering the prodigious difference between eighteen, and six and forty. The more years they have over their heads, child, the abler are they to advise such young chits as you; and give me leave to tell you, I have begged them to have an eye over you.

Thank you, sir, cried I, though I was ready to burst with vexation, you have given me two excellent Mentors, upon my honour; it will be of no use for me to be on my guard, as I am certain every fault of mine will be exaggerated to you.

When I had the misfortune to lose my papa, you kindly promised to be my protector. You prevailed on me to come to this sequestered spot, took me from the most intimate friends I had, and when I only asked you to let me go to town to be present at my friend's wedding, you

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denied me; even then I would have strove, after the first vexation was over, to be content, had I no one to superintend my conduct but yourself; but to set two such beings over me as Prue and Turner, is not to be borne. Mr. Niggard, just then coming in, prevented any reply from my uncle, and I retired to my apartment with a heart so full, that I cried for two hours. I really am quite sick, and cannot much longer bear this horrid confinement; besides, I cannot possibly divine the cause of my uncle's keeping me thus sequestered from the world; I know all the three old maids are perfect anarchs, and what mischief they may hatch, I know not. At present I will think no more, but conclude with wishing you all imaginable happiness with the man of your choice.

Your sincere friend,

SOPHIA RICHINGFORD.

LETTER

LETTER XXXIV.

Miss WATSON to Miss NEWTON.

MAY this auspicious morn never know
 a cloud, and may each revolving sun
 heap fresh blessings on this deserving
 pair! Need I now tell my Harriot, that
 this morning my sister gave her hand to
 Lord Wimbleton? I however was deter-
 mined to steal one quarter of an hour,
 that my friend might participate as soon as
 possible the general joy. My Lord seems
 to have neither eyes or ears for any one
 but his amiable wife, and with reason,
 for she absolutely looks like an angel.

Papa and mamma are delighted with
 their son-in-law, and the Earl of Wall-
 brook no less so with my sister; in short,
 every one seems equally pleased with the
 bride and bridegroom. Here comes Lady

G 6

Mary,

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Mary she insists on my leaving the pen, and will scarce let me subscribe myself

Your affectionate friend,

ELIZA WATSON.

LETTER XXXV.

Miss TALMASH to LADY MARY MANLY.

INDEED, my dear Mary, your last was very little to the purpose, as you say.

I see I have entirely lost my friend, and in her room is substituted, the true woman of fashion. You know my detestation of your modern women of quality; why then will my friend write in a style which serves only to convince me she is that truly insignificant being? Excuse me, my dear, for my freedom; but why should a young woman, because she happens

pens to be blest with a title and fortune, think herself authorized to plunge into every fashionable folly? Why cannot she partake of the various pleasures of the town in moderation, without running lengths which must sully her fame, and deter any worthy man from forming a connection with her. Though I write thus, heaven forbid it should be the case of my dear Lady Mary! for I still believe, 'spite of your giddy writing, your heart is uncontaminated by guilt; but indeed my dear, you let your spirits run away with your senses.

Methinks I hear you say, enough of this stupid stuff; if you have nothing more amusing to write, for heaven's sake throw away your pen.

Well, my dear, I will give you no more musty advice; but as I have a great aversion to sending a sheet of paper half filled, will write you a piece of news. I

believe

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believe when you was here last year, you saw Sir Thomas Brooks ; he is now, alas ! no more. He was taken very ill about a month ago ; so ill, that it was judged necessary to send for his son and daughter. The young gentleman being on his travels ; the lady in a convent, where she had been placed for the *finale* of her education. [She] was to have left France next summer, when her brother was likewise to return from his travels.

I must say that neither of them seem so much shocked at their recent loss, as I should have imagined they would, for the worthy Sir Thomas died three days after their arrival. I wish the son may walk in the steps of his father, but I am fearful he will not. In short, I cannot say I like either Sir William, or his sister ; the one being a downright coxcomb. the other an errant coquette. I imagine my dear Lady Mary is heartily
tired

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tired of this scrawl, I will therefore
hasten to subscribe myself

Her sincere friend,

ETHELINDA TALMASH.

The papers inform me your cousin is
married; may all real felicity attend her.

LETTER XXXIX.

LADY WIMBLETON to Miss
RICHINGFORD.

I Received my dear friend's letter the
very day I resigned my liberty. Your
situation is indeed intolerable, and I sin-
cerely wish it was in my power to release
you. I could not help a gloom which
overspread my countenance on reading
the contents of yours; but by the un-
remitting attention of my Wimbleton,
and my friends in general, it soon dis-
persed,

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perfed. I beg you will on no account let your fpirits funk, nor fuffer any thing to dwell long on your mind, but let me participate, and depend, if it is any way in my power to ferve my dear Sophia, I will.

Will you believe me, I am fick of the parade which furrounds me, and have begged my Lord to take me to Wimbeldon Lodge for a week. He has promifed me he will, and I believe we fhall fet off on Sunday : my fifter will accompany us. Therefore, my love, if you write in the courfe of the week, let it be directed there. Papa and mamma have complied with the request of the Countefs of Chorlebury and her daughter, of fpending the remainder of the winter with them. My poor fifter feems not to relifh this fcheme at all : I believe they wifh to fee her married before they return to Elm-Wood. I have intreated Eliza to forget the Captain ; but I preach in vain. She indeed

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deed assures me she has given him up long ago; but her altered face, and altered spirits entirely contradict her tongue.

I must bid you adieu, to dress for the Pantheon. If possible I will write while at the lodge. Let me hear from you soon. I again intreat you to keep up your spirits.

Yours affectionately,

A. WIMBLETON.

LETTER XXXVII.

The Right Hon. LORD WIMBLETON to
R. RIVERS, Esq.

I Write, Bob, to inform you we are, at the desire of my adorable Arabella, going to spend a week or two at Wimbeldon Lodge. She is at present, she tells me, quite sated with the pleasures of the town, and adds, she shall have a double relish for them, on her return. Now if
you

you have an inclination to be a witness what a good husband I make, you will pay us a visit. Miss Watson accompanies us. But you must be quick in your motions, or we probably may whirl to town again before your dull worship thinks of setting off; for I imagine my charmer will not like to stay long after the frost breaks.

So poor Weston and his brother have had a bickering with their uncle; nay, it is even gone so far, that he forbade them the house, and they in consequence have entered into a regiment destined for America. Upon my soul I pity them, for they were noble fellows. The old Earl looks very cool likewise upon Hervey, for though they were both in the same box last night at the play, nothing farther than a cold salute passed on either side. I suppose he pleaded for them, and so brought down the old don's wrath upon himself. However I don't think

he

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he will be long inexorable, as all the world take the part of the young men. Some indeed have said there was a woman in the case, of neither family nor fortune, whom Lord Weston wanted to marry; but Hervey assures me of the contrary. Here comes my angelic wife, so not another stroke from

Yours,

WIMBLETON.

LETTER XXXVIII.

LADY MARY MANLY to Miss TALMASH.

THANK you for the prudent advice contained in your last, Ethelinda; when I grow ancient I'll strive to follow it.

I should not have written so soon, I assure you, but Lord and Lady Wimbleton intend a trip to Wimbleton Lodge;
and

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and as it is not above half a mile from the good Sir Henry Talmash's, her ladyship has promised to give you this, by way of introduction to your fair self. Her sister Eliza accompanies them; I make not the least doubt but you three will take a great fancy to each other; be it so, I have too good an opinion of self to think I shall be entirely cast off.

Thank you for the account of the Brooks family; I cannot say I remember much of them. The town is not at present very full. Several divorces are talked of:—fine encouragement for matrimony. Thank my stars! there is no fear as yet of my entering the holy state; though I lay my life we have another wedding in the family soon, as a number of beaux begin to flutter about my fair cousin Eliza; but they seem in most danger of being burnt, while the beautiful moth they pursue escapes without even singeing her wings.

I had

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I had gained two lovers before she came, but as soon as she arrived, they made their exit, and attached themselves wholly to her. They are not a bit the nearer accomplishing their wishes however, as she treats them with such coldness, they cannot form the most distant hope.

I don't know, my dear, if this will meet a more favourable reception than my last, but such as it is I shall commint it to the care of Lady Wimbleton, who sets off in the morning. Adieu, my dear.

Yours,

M—— MANLY.

LETTER XXXIX.

Miss RICHINGFORD to LADY
WIMBLETON.

JOY! joy to my friend! May you be
for ever happy, and may no cross ac-
cident interrupt your felicity. I am very
angry

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angry that my doleful epistle must just reach you on your wedding day, and more so that you gave it a thought, or even read it. I a little wonder you should like to leave town at this dreary season of the year : I am sure it is very disagreeable in this part of the world ; but perhaps it appears more dismal to me on account of the people than the place.

It being a fine frosty day yesterday, I took a walk to Farmer Ludlow's, and had the pleasure to find Mrs. Ludlow alone. We soon entered into chat, when she told me, that Sir Andrew Mead's house is repairing, by order of the steward, as the family propose spending the summer here : it consists of Sir Andrew, his lady, and a ward of theirs. This was all the intelligence Mrs. Ludlow could give me, as she could not so much as tell if the ward was a lady or gentleman. She said she thought Lady Mead a very agreeable woman, though she saw but
little

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little of her, as she was far from well all the time she was there.

While Mrs. Ludlow was talking, we saw a gentleman on horseback stop at the gate, whom the servant soon announced by the name of Pawner. He paid his compliments to Mrs. Ludlow in a polite, though conceited manner, telling her he was come to spend a week or so with her if she would give him leave. She answered, she should be glad of his company; adding, she thought he never intended visiting this part of the world again. "Why really, ma'am, (said he) "I have had no time to spare for these "two or three years past, for on settling "my affairs after the death of my mother, "I went to town with a design of settling "there, but as soon as the operas and "concerts ended, (for you know I am passionately fond of music)" ; and turning to me, *music hath charms to sooth the savage breast*, ma'am; and then pursuing his discourse :

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course: "I grew tired, and again re-
 "turned to Worcester; where, to tell
 "you the truth, I had like to have mar-
 "ried, but somehow or other the match
 "was broke off, for I had no particular
 "fancy to the lady."

Thus did this conceited fop run on;
 however, when his discourse became more
 general, I bore a part in it. We were
 talking of music, of which indeed he
 seems to be a judge, when who should
 enter but Misses Prue and Turner! "La,
 "Miss Sophia (cried the former) your
 "uncle thought you was lost; why we
 "have waited for you at the Abbey these
 "two hours." "I am very sorry indeed,
 "madam; pray what did you want with
 "me?" "Lord, miss, you are very
 "forgetful! (cries Miss Prue) don't you
 "know you promised Mrs. Niggard to
 "spend the evening there?" "Well,
 "(interrupted I) but I did not say I
 "would dine there." "I know that
 " (says

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“(says Prue) but they sent this morning
“to invite us all to dinner.” “Ah!
“well then, be so good to make my ex-
“cuse, and I will join you at tea.”
“How, miss! why your uncle is gone,
“and desired we would bring you with us.”
“I am much obliged to my uncle and
“you, ladies, but had rather be excused.”
“O very well, miss. Come along Miss
“Prue; but I see the reason, (casting
“her sprightly eyes at Mr. Pawner) and
“shall inform her uncle of it.”

Good heaven! Arabella, how I col-
loured at this insolent speech; for the
short conversation I had with this gentle-
man, proved him very conceited. I got
up, saying, “Ah! well, I’ll go with you,
“and will call of you, Mrs. Ludlow,
“some other time.” Then taking my
cloak I followed them. They told my
uncle I was come very much against my
will, as they found me engaged with
H my

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my favourite Mrs. Ludlow and a strange gentleman.

You may think, my dear, I spent the day very disagreeably, and was happy when I got home. Mrs. Ludlow called on me the next day : I asked her who that gentleman was ? She told me he was a man of small fortune, and chiefly resided at Worcester ; he was very conceited, but otherwise inoffensive enough.

Excuse me, my dear Lady Wimbleton, for relating such insipid stuff, but it is merely to inform you of the disagreeable life I lead. My visits to Mrs. Ludlow must cease, at least till Mr. Pawner makes his exit : it is rather hard, but it can't be helped. My spirits still remain, therefore I shall get through with it. I am very sorry about your sister, but surely your papa and mamma will not force her choice. Adieu, my dearest only friend.

Yours,

SOPHIA RICHINGFORD.

LETTER

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LETTER XL.

Hon. E. WESTON to ——— STANLEY, Esq.

Guernsey.

HERE we are, Stanley, very safe. My lord bore the journey better than I expected, and was in tolerable spirits all the way. I can give very little account of the place; besides I need not, as you have been here. I know every thing is at present confounded dear, but that we must put up with. Here are plenty of red-coats, as the women call them, who have little else to do than conge from place to place. Some spend their evenings in drinking, some in gambling, and others amuse themselves by the fire-side: among the latter are Lord Weston and your humble servant. I should wish to draw him into company; but there he must either drink or game, neither of which would suit.

H 2

Have

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Have you had an opportunity of seeing Miss Watson yet? If you have, give me your opinion of her. I am afraid my poor brother will never get rid of his *amitie* for that girl. Would to heaven we had never seen Elm-Wood! but what is past cannot be recalled. I scarce know where to direct this, as you are never long in a place, but suppose it will be forwarded to you from London, where I shall send it.

When do you set off for Lord Scamper's? or are you already there? Let me have a long letter soon, as that is all the the amusement we have. How are our uncle and Harry? Is the old don still in dudgeon with him? I wonder what he thinks of himself, an old ———! but no matter, I'll say no more. I again beg you to write soon.

Yours,

EDWARD WESTON.

LETTER

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LETTER XLII.

Miss BROOKS to Miss LA ROACH.

I Am absolutely *a la mort* with spleen :
Sir Thomas died three days after our
arrival. Only think of the horrid situ-
ation my brother and I must be in ;
forced to confine ourselves to a sick
chamber, and feign a sorrow not in our
power to feel ; obliged likewise to listen
to advice we shall never follow. At length
the horrid scene closed : never do I
wish you to be present at such an one.
His last words are still fresh in my me-
mory, which were :

"To you, my son, I recommend my
"Hellen ; be to her as father, brother,
"and friend ; watch over her tender
"years, nor let the rude hand of mis-
"fortune molest her. You are both
"young ; when I am gone, ye have no
"relation left. Be careful how you tread

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“ in a wrong path, as when once you go
 “ astray, many are the difficulties you
 “ must encounter before you can regain
 “ your former tract : in such a case how-
 “ ever, put your trust in Providence.
 “ The lamp of life extinguishes fast, my
 “ children, and the rude hand of death
 “ comes quick upon me ; I thank my
 “ God, however, that I can look to a
 “ future state without fear ; and may my
 “ children breathe their last” ——— He
 stopped, prest the hand of each, and ex-
 pired.

A speechless horror seized my whole
 frame, and I sunk lifeless into the arms
 of my brother ; excuse the rest of this
 horrific scene ; suffice it to say, the night
 I spent was dreadful ; whenever I closed
 my eyes my father's image presented
 itself. Morning at length came, and
 with it some share of my wonted serenity.
 It is now three weeks since my father
 died. Sir William tells me he will take
 me

THE FALSE FRIENDS. 157

me to town as soon as decency will permit. I shall be happy to go there as I long very much to see that gay metropolis. When will the time come for you to leave those gloomy walls? I wish you was here, the time would appear less irksome. Here is a Sir Henry Talmash (he was a great intimate of our late father's) and his daughter; she is scarce eighteen, and has a tolerable person, but is a perfect lump of dullness. But as any place is preferable to home at this juncture, we accepted his invitation, from whence I now write this. I wish I had something amusing to write, but this place affords not the least variety, therefore adieu.

Yours,

HELLEN BROOKS.

H 4

LETTER

LETTER XLII.

The Hon. JOHN HERVEY to LORD
WESTON.

AS I imagine you are by this time at ———, I will tell you that Wimbledon was married about three weeks ago. They are gone to spend a week at the lodge, accompanied by Miss Watson. You, Ned, I, and George, have spent many a happy day there with Wimbledon during the vacation, but his going on his travels made us soon forget him. He now seems to wish me to renew our former intimacy. I am very ready so to do, as by that means I shall have more opportunity of informing you of the lovely Eliza's motions.

I have casually met your uncle in public, but we are very cool. I shall not be backward in due time to make advances towards a reconciliation: but I
would

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would wish him first to think himself in the wrong, though his rank and age may prevent his owning it. I still think, after a little consideration, he will know he has not used you justly; therefore courage, my friends, for I hope all will end well yet.

I dare say you remember William Brooks, at college. His father is lately dead; and I find his son and daughter were sent for from France in a great hurry to receive his last blessing. I have heard a most worthy character of the old gentleman; I wish his successor, now Sir William, may deserve the same; but I remember neither you nor I ever liked him, and was sorry to see Wimbleton so attached to him, as he was too strongly attached to vice, to be a fit companion for one who had it not in his power to suppress the torrent of his passions.

I should not have given so much of my time and paper to Brooks, only as

LETTER

H 5

the

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the late Sir Thomas's feat is very near Wimbleton Lodge, and as Sir William is there, I am afraid he will renew his acquaintance with his lordship. I say afraid, as I am very sure Wimbleton ought to have very good advisers, or I much fear he will forget the lovely woman he is possessed of, and ramble after new pleasures. But I hope Brooks has left his vices behind him; though sorry am I to say, that I have seldom found the errors (to call them by no harsher name) that young fellows imbibed in their youth, were ever thrown aside in maturer years, or at least till they had suffered severely for their folly. I have ran into a greater length than I intended, therefore will hasten to conclude. Remember me to Ned, and assure him and yourself of the unalterable esteem and friendship of

J. HERVEY.

LETTER

LETTER XLIII.

MISS WATSON to Miss NEWTON;

Wimbleton-Lodge.

MY dear Harriot would have received a letter ere this, if I had not been deeply engaged in paying and receiving visits with my sister, on account of her marriage; and she was so wearied and fatigued, that she desired my Lord to take her to Wimbleton Lodge; the place where I now date this from. It is the sweetest spot in nature; the house is small, but the rural simplicity of it makes it and its environs a perfect Eden. There is a long gravel walk which leads to the house, planted on each side with trees, whose thick nodding branches meeting at top, form the most agreeable canopy imaginable; in a delightful garden and pleasure ground, in summer, it must be charming, as notwithstanding the present

H 6

inclement

inclement season, it is far from disagreeable. But enough of this subject, as I want to give some account of a family which lives near here. It is a Sir Henry Talmarsh and his daughter; one of the most agreeable young ladies I ever met with; she is a very intimate friend of my cousin Lady Mary, who gave my sister a letter to her friend, as she humorously told her, by way of introduction.

There are on a visit at their house, a Sir William Brooks, and his sister, whose father is lately dead. She is tall, and has a good face, though if I may be permitted to use the phrase, rather a shewy than beautiful set of features. She has a liveliness, which I think rather borders on levity, or at least not fitting her present situation, as the recent death of her father, I should have imagined, would cast a damp on her spirits. I fancy she is not very fond of me; but as she pays great court to my sister, and is very often here, chance sometimes leaves us alone,
and

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and we are so; we appear under a restraint, which borders nearly into aversion. This you will say is very unaccountable. It certainly is, and I can give no reason for it. My Lord and Sir William were at college together, and when there were very intimate. They met afterwards at Bologna, but since that time they have had no connection till this accidental meeting at the lodge. As to Miss Brooks, my lord immediately recollected having seen her at a convent in France, though they at that time did not so much as know each other's name. Thus you see, my dear, an intimacy is unavoidable. My sister likes Miss Brooks much, and tries to laugh me out of my whim; but it will not do, for where I take a disgust, I cannot so easily get rid of it. Her brother honours me with a great share of his attention, but I give him very little encouragement; as the brother, any more than the sister, shall
never,

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never, at least if I can help it, have any connection with me. We set off from this place on Tuesday for London. Heigh oh! Harriot; I wish I was at Elm-Wood again, for I have never been in spirits since I left it.

I forgot to tell you that my lord and his lady had invited Sir William and Miss Brooks to town with them, and they partly accepted it; but the next day a letter arrived from a gentleman and lady at Bath, who were intimate with their late father, and therefore were obliged to decline my sister's invitation. I think this letter is of a very decent length, so will add no more than to subscribe myself,

Your sincere friend,

E. WATSON.

LETTER

LETTER XLIV.

LORD WESTON to JOHN HERVEY, Esq.

G—

WE are still here, my friend, and see no likelihood of leaving it, as they are afraid of the French landing. This moment received your's; the contents give me pleasure, as by your renewing your intimacy with Wimbleton, I shall have the supreme felicity of hearing of the angelic Eliza.

I am heartily sorry my uncle still looks cool upon you, and shall be very uneasy till I hear you are reconciled. I, as well as Ned, perfectly remember Brooks; and likewise remember he was not a favourite of any of us: his sister I never saw.

Wimbleton can never be so base to let any wretch lead him into vice now he is married, and to so deserving and amiable a woman. Too certain it is that vice often
gets

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gets the better of virtue. Heaven forbid it should here be the case, as I am certain any neglect of his lordship would occasion his lady, if she is possessed of but half the sensibility of her lovely sister, a great deal of anxiety: but he cannot be such a villain.

You must not expect long letters from hence, as there is nothing entertaining or new, not letter for letter. Ned is such a lazy fellow, and hates writing, else his letters would be much more entertaining than mine. He desires to be remembered to you and Stanley, as does

Your sincere and obliged friend,

G. WESTON.

LETTER

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LETTER XLV.

Lady WIMBLETON to Miss RICHINGFORD.

Wimbleton-Lodge.

I Received your's yesterday. Indeed, my dear Sophia, I pity you greatly, as your situation must be truly disagreeable. I wish with all my heart you was here, for we are all life and festivity; this is a sweet spot.

A Sir Henry Talmarsh and his daughter have a house very near the lodge. They are very agreeable neighbours, and very conversant. There are on a visit to them, a Sir William Brooks and his sister; they have lately lost their father, whose estate is in this part of the country.

Sir William is quite a gay gentleman, and I believe admires my sister greatly. Miss Brooks I have taken a great fancy to, as I think she very much resembles my Sophia. She is a fine shewy woman, is
very

very gay, not to say giddy ; but I look on it more as the effect of youth and a French education, than any real levity ; yet my sister will have it, it proceeds from the latter. She and I often fall out about these two people, as she dislikes the brother as much as the sister ; but indeed she is grown splenetic, and so I told her this morning. She is indeed so altered, that none of her friends at Elm-Wood would know her.

We leave this place on Tuesday. My lord (for he knew Sir William abroad) asked him and his sister to spend the rest of the winter with us in town. They accepted the invitation ; but soon after receiving a letter of invitation from Bath, which they are forced to accept of, for a week or two postponed.

I wish Sir Toby would let my Sophia come for a month or so, and then I should be happy ; though completely so I cannot be till I see my sister's spirits restored

to

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to their wonted pitch; when that will be, heaven knows. I make no doubt but you will soon have an humble admirer in Mr. Pawner; he will occasion you a little mirth I hope, and help to keep up your spirits. As to the odious Prue and Turner, I wish they were at the bottom of one of your uncle's fish-ponds; they are positively a disgrace to the sisterhood, and ought to be expelled the society of antiquarian spinsters.

I do not know if ever I mentioned to you a Lord Weston, whom I saw once, as being a remarkable handsome man. He called at the Countess of Chorlebury's about a week or ten days before I was married; he looked then very melancholy, and my lord has since told me, he and his brother have been discarded by their uncle, the Earl of Wallbrook, on account of some gaming debts they had contracted, and where unable to discharge; and that they are now, it is supposed,

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supposed, gone to America. How very shocking it is, my Sophia, that our young men of fashion will engage so deep in play ! How many are ruined by this abominable vice. I pity this gentleman much, as his countenance bespoke a benevolent and generous heart. Heaven forbid Lord Wimbleton should ever take to this failing ; for I believe at present he has no kind of fancy to it ; and I am very confident no wife can be happy with a man who spends his time and fortune at a gaming table.

Miss Brooks I am informed is below, therefore I am sure you will excuse me. Farewel, my beloved friend.

A. WIMBLETON.

LETTER

LETTER XLVI.

— STANLEY, Esq. to the Right Hon.
EDWARD WESTON.

Scamper-Hall.

I Received yours on Thursday, and have complied with your desire of writing immediately, I am glad to hear you got safe to G —.

I commend you much in not taking your brother into company, as there is such a strange set. As to your first question relating to Miss Watson, I have seen her, and think her very handsome; I thought she looked melancholy, but perhaps it is her natural countenance.

Your uncle still continue to look cool, on Hervey; yet I do not think this animosity will last long; the old Earl has a good heart, and perhaps it now aches for what he was forced to do; for you well know the great antipathy he had to gaming.

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ing. I wish every father, uncle, or guardian was of his way of thinking; how many thoughtless youths would be saved from ruin!

You see where I am, by the date of this. My lord received me very coldly; my lady with forced civility; not that they were together, no, they are too fashionable for that; though they are in the country, they are as much apart as possible. I asked her ladyship, when she and my lord proposed going to town? "Indeed, Mr. Stanley (said she) I know nothing of my lord's intentions; I myself intend setting off in a week or ten days." "But your ladyship don't go alone?" "O, no! Sir Harry Flutter, my Lord Shatter, and Lady Chatwell, will be of my party." All these noble personages you and your brother knew. The parlour door now flew open, and they all entered, when Sir Harry began: "Lady Frances, I hope I see you well."

"O,

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"O, Sir Harry! you rioted so last night, that you have unstrung my nerves for this twelvemonth." Much more small-talk took place, which was interrupted by my lord's entrance, and paying his compliments to them and his lady, whom I found he had not seen this morning before. Thus do the great people, or at least a great part of them, live. My brother, who has scarce been married a twelvemonth to Lady Frances, is quite a *modish* husband, and she a *modish* wife. They have separate apartments, and separate amusements; and in town separate tables: and I am informed they are frequently two or three days without seeing each other.

What a delectable age do we live in, Ned; the men marry to have an heir to their estate, and to have that estate mended by their wife's fortune; the women that they may run to every place of amusement, without being tied to their mother's

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mother's apron-string, or forced to observe rules which, while unmarried, would fully their reputation.

I shall remain here till they go to town, when I shall cross the country, spend another week with Sir Thomas Bell, and then to London, where I shall continue till Sir Andrew Mead sets off for Mead-Hall. I have given you now a very exact detail of all my engagements. When I shall write again I know not; at present I have no subject to exercise my pen, but if any thing amusing occurs, will send you another letter soon. Remember me to Lord Weston; and believe me

Yours,

— STANLEY.

LETTER

LETTER XLVII.

Miss RICHINGFORD to LADY
WIMBLETON.

Richingford Abbey.

WELL, my Arabella! I have positively had an offer of marriage from Mr. Pawner; whom I have as positively refused, to his dire dismay, and the astonishment of the three ladies. My uncle is quite pleased with me, and I am nothing at present but his dear Sophia. How long it will continue I know not.

Poor Mrs. Ludlow was quite in a panic on account of Mr. Pawner's resolution of offering himself for my acceptance. She repeatedly told him that my fortune and connections rendered me very unfit for his wife. But the young man's vanity was raised by what Miss Turner had said, and he was determined to try his luck, as he called it.

I

All

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All this I was informed of before he came, so that I was thoroughly prepared for his reception. You will perhaps call me cruel when I tell you, I wished to mortify his pride. I thought of many schemes, but rejected them all; till at length I determed to send [for Mrs. Ludlow had informed me he proposed coming about one o'clock the next day] a note to Misses Prue, Turner, and Garthron, to desire their company to dinner; at the same time begging they would not stay till the usual dinner hour, but come early. They sent me word they would wait on me.

Mr. Pawner came exactly to his time, when having sat about half an hour, and got over several hums and ha's, he made me an offer of his sweet self. I could scarce forbear laughing at him, but determining to check my risibility, I held down my head, blushed, or at least affected to blush, and worked as hard as I could. My swain, construing my silence
for

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for consent, took my hand, and entreated me to answer him; at the same time assuring me, he would make whatever settlement I and my uncle chose to name.

At that moment the door opened, and the three *misses* entered. They started back, at seeing Mr. Pawner holding my hand, as if they had seen an apparition. I immediately rose and begged them to be seated; when, turning to my Cymon, and courtesying, "I am obliged to you, sir, (said I) for your favourable opinion of me; but as I don't think you and I should be happy in the marriage state, give me leave to reject both you and your fortune." He stared at me, and seemed to wish to say something, but not being able to find his tongue at liberty, he with a hasty low bow left the room.

The three ladies looked with astonishment at each other, but said nothing. But my uncle (for he entered the room with them) desired to know what I meant.

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“ Why, my good fir, (said I) through
 “ Miss Turner’s insinuation the other
 “ day, that I staid at Mrs. Ludlow’s
 “ to enjoy the company of Mr. Pawner,
 “ he took it into his wife head, I was in
 “ love with him, and came to me this
 “ morning, to offer himself to me in form ;
 “ but I thought proper to reject him and
 “ his suit. For the future, ladies, I beg
 “ you will never throw out any such in-
 “ sinuations about me.” They looked
 foolish, but said nothing. As to poor
 Pawner, he has set off for town, raving
 at me for making him ridiculous before
 those three she devils (the name he has
 thought proper to give them).

Now, my dear, let me thank you for
 your letter, for I have been too full of
 self to think of it before. I should in-
 deed like to be with you, but that plea-
 sure is still denied me ; for I have again
 ventured to propose it,

I don’t

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I don't dislike the character you give of Miss Brooks, but think it odd your sister should have such an antipathy to her, for which reason I would advise you, my dear Lady Wimbleton, not to trust her too far, as your sister who is not so happy as could be wished, may see farther than you, who are surrounded with pleasure and ease. As to her being splenetic, I can hardly think such a heart as you have told me she possessed, would depreciate any one. I can be no judge, therefore beg you will pardon me if I have been too free. Pray write as soon as possible when in town, as I hope I need not tell you the pleasure your letters give to

Your ladyship's sincere friend,

SOPHIA RICHINGFORD.

LETTER XLVIII.

SIR WILLIAM BROOKS to A. DINGLY, Esq.

Bath.

DINGLY, I'm in love; yes, I again repeat, *in love*. But, alas! it is with one whose steady principles, and strict adherence to that bugbear *virtue*, almost persuades me I am mad in thinking to shake it. However, I have made my sister my confidante, and when a woman, Archer, condescends to assist us, we cannot fail of success. May not a woman mould us to any thing? but to proceed: The goddess I adore, is wife to Lord Wimbleton, and has not been married more than six weeks: to attempt a description, at least one to do her justice, is impossible. Figure to yourself all that is lovely in woman, and you may form some idea of her ladyship. My lord brought her, accompanied by her sister,

(who

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(who is not less lovely) to a seat he has not far from Sir Henry Talmash. To be brief, we soon renewed our former acquaintance begun at college. The first moment I saw Lady Wimbleton I was struck, for I think till that I never saw a woman so uniformly lovely.

Her sister claimed a great share of my attention, and I thought it most prudent to attach myself to her, but soon found I had not the mere country girl I expected to meet with (for neither of the ladies have been in the *beau monde* till this winter) but one who could penetrate into the deception: this forced me to be on my guard.

My sister soon grew intimate with the married lady; but Miss Watson received all her advances, as well as mine, with coolness. Lady Wimbleton treated me with great politeness, as the friend of her husband, but no more; but beyond our expectations (for between you and

me, I believe my sister is as much struck with Wimbleton as I am with his lady therefore she would have no objection to cause a divorce, thinking to catch his lordship. This you will say is a bold stroke, as it is a chance if he will marry the sister of the man who had seduced his wife. But certain I am, those are her hopes; though as I before observed, what cannot a woman undertake? Besides, the times are so much in our favour, that any mischief, with its attendant *vice*, is far from impracticable): but where is my pen running. As I was saying above, beyond our expectations, both my lord and lady very pressingly invited us to spend some time with them at their house in town. We neither accepted nor refused their offer just then.

The next morning a letter was brought me from a particular friend of my father's, with a pressing invitation for Helen and self to come to their house at Bath, I consulted

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sulted my sister, who advised me to accept it, adding, that after spending a few weeks there, we may, on a renewal of his lordship's invitation (which I make no doubt of) pass the rest of the winter with them.

This being settled, I told my lord we were under the necessity of declining the honour he intended us; as, by the desire of a particular friend, we were obliged to go to Bath.

My lady then with great politeness turned to Helen, and said, "Make your visit as short as possible, and then join us again in town." This, after some necessary compliment, we complied with. Miss Watson was not present when the above passed. They left the lodge on the Sunday, and we Sir Harry's on the Thursday. My paper is too full to enter on any particular concerning the company here. We shall not stay above a month, as my sister is full as impatient to

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join the Wimbletons as myself. Let me hear from you, as you shall from me, if any thing worthy of notice occurs.

Yours,

WILLIAM BROOKS.

LETTER XLIX.

Miss WATSON to Miss NEWTON.

London.

IT is with an aching heart I now take up my pen to address my dear Harriot.

O my friend! you remember, I dare say, what I said in a former letter concerning my sister being forced to marry a man she could not love. Little did I then think it would so soon be my own case; but I will try to be particular.

I believe

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I believe I told you in my last we were to leave the lodge on the Sunday following; we did so, and were in great spirits: papa and mamma met us in their chaise. I saw my father had something to communicate by the turn of his countenance. When we arrived at St. James's-Square, my sister would have persuaded them to alight and spend the day there, but they would not consent, having promised to dine in Arlington-Street. On our arrival there, I went to dress, and was soon joined by my cousin.

"Well child, (cried she) in her lively way, I do not know whether to be glad or sorry you are come home."

"I hope you have no occasion for the lat-

"ter, my dear." "Why no, I am not

"sorry, as I shall so soon get rid of you for

"good. What say you to a husband,

"child?" "For heaven's sake! Lady

"Mary, explain yourself, (cried I) quite

"out of breath." "Bless me, my dear,

" you seem agitated ! I thought you
 " would have been quite overjoyed at the
 " thoughts of a husband ! " " For God's
 " sake ! my dear cousin, do not trifle
 " with me, but tell me all you know." " Why my dear, is it possible you could
 " be insensible to the impression your
 " charms made on the heart of Sir Henry
 " Fortescue, when you danced with him
 " at Lady Dancer's assembly ? "

" You terrify me to death ! but sure
 " he has not spoke to my father ? " " In-
 " deed but he has ; and more, he is to be
 " here this day to offer himself in form to
 " you." " It is in vain ; I never can be
 " his." " You amaze me ; why should
 " you have such a dislike to Sir Henry ?
 " He is in general reckoned a very pretty
 " fellow among the females ; he is sen-
 " sible and well bred, and has none of
 " the fopperies and follies so inherent to
 " our modern fine gentlemen." " I am
 " sorry to hear it, for the more worthy
 " he

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“he is, the more pain (if he is really in earnest) will it give me to refuse him.”

“Then you are prepossessed in favour of another, my fair coz.” said Lady Mary with an arch smile. A conscious blush arose in my cheek at this, for well do I feel the indelicacy I am guilty of, in suffering myself to have a partiality for one who never gave me reason to think he had any particular regard for me.

The entrance of my mother not a little added to my confusion; and more so when she said, “What not dressed yet, girls?” Lady Mary told her she should soon be ready, and left the room.

Mamma then sitting down, said, “my dear, why this agitation? Are you not well?” “Not very well, madam, (stammered I).” “You seemed quite well and cheerful this morning, my dear; is it any thing your cousin has told you that has occasioned this sudden indisposition?”

“O my

"O my dear mamma, excuse me just now, and beg the company to do the same."

"Indeed my love, I can do no such thing; your papa will be very angry, as he wishes to introduce a gentleman to you."

"Indeed, indeed, I cannot see him."

"You amaze me, my dear, sure this cannot be my Eliza who is so capricious: why should you refuse to see a friend of your father's? I have not so much as told you his name."

"O my dear mamma, (I replied) but I know it, and likewise what his business is. I cannot marry yet, indeed I cannot."

"Pray my love, has Lady Mary said any thing to prejudice you against Sir Henry Fortescue?"

"Quite the contrary, madam; and it is to prevent giving pain to a worthy heart

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"heart that I now beg you to inform him
"that I never can be his."

"I really, my dear, don't understand
"you; sure you have not given your
"heart away without the knowledge of
"your father or me? As to forcing you
"to wed a man you do not like, it is
"far from my thoughts; and I hope from
"your father's also; but your present
"behaviour is quite a riddle."

"Sir Henry I think is every way
"deserving of you; but still, if on a
"nearer acquaintance you found you
"could not like him, your papa would
"certainly use no force; though still you
"must give some reason for your re-
"jection."

The dinner-bell now ringing, prevented
a reply, and I was forced by my mother's
command to go down. Sir Henry be-
haved in the most respectful manner,
while I stayed; for he had no opportu-
nity (to my great joy) of speaking to me
then

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then. The next morning he came, and having nobody with me but my father, he soon gave him an opportunity to declare his sentiments to me, by leaving the room. I thanked him in the best manner I was able, but at the same time assured him, I never could be his.

“ I hope madam, (said he) that nothing particularly disagreeable has appeared in my behaviour, to make you form so hasty a resolution.” “ Far from it sir, (I replied) but as I should be sorry to give pain to any one, more especially to you, who on so short an acquaintance have made me so generous an offer, I think it a duty incumbent on me to assure you I never can be yours.”

Excuse the rest of our conversation, my dear; suffice it to say, I could not prevail on him to give me up, “ as he had been informed (he said) I had not given encouragement to any other man.”

“ Certainly

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"Certainly not, sir, (I returned) yet I cannot accept of you." Here, to my great relief, company came in and prevented his reply. I avoided being left alone with either my father or mother the whole day, and retired early in the evening, on account of the head-ach, which I felt intensely. Not being disposed to sleep, I sat down to give you this account; but now my head is so bad, I must conclude with begging you to pity

Your sincere friend,

ELIZA WATSON.

LETTER L.

Lady WIMBLETON to Miss RICHINGFORD.

I Received your last favour three hours after my arrival in town, and was much diverted at your dismissal of poor Pawner. You must, however, excuse my dwelling

dwelling on this subject, as my poor sister calls for all my attention. To be as concise as possible: a Sir Henry Fortescue saw her at Lady Dancer's the night before we went to Wimbleton Lodge; he fell in love with her, and while we were out of town made proposals to my father, who accepted them.

My sister assures me she cannot marry Sir Henry, but am sorry to see Mr. Watson seems bent on the match. I am quite at a loss what to do; my mamma questions me pretty closely about Eliza, as she says she is certain I know the true state of her heart. I evade her questions as much as possible, though they puzzle me greatly, as I have promised the dear girl not to betray the secret confided to me.

My Sophia may condemn me for not telling the truth: if it would be of the least service, I would not hesitate a moment. A stranger, and a man who at least appeared beneath her notice, and who

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who never in direct or indirect terms told her he loved, but left the country without the least seeming wish for another interview. After the above what can I say to mamma. Altered she is most certainly, every one perceives it; though no one can divine the *why* or *wherefore*.

Sir Henry she declares (were there no Farmborough) she would never have, as she does not like him. Lady Mary Manly and Lady Catherine Worthy he is no favourite with, which is a great matter on her side. Lord Wimbleton will neither praise or depreciate him. In short, he has none of the family in his favour but my father and mother. What the event will be, heaven knows! I am alarmed for her health, though she assures me she is not ill. Would to God she had left Elm-Wood when I did, she would never then have seen those odious red coats!

Nine in the evening.

Lady Mary just came in as I had finished the above, and told me my poor sister was not well. I went to her immediately; she had just been bled, which had lowered her spirits so much, she was scarce sensible of my entrance. She is now however a great deal better, and I hope in a day or two, will be quite recovered. I am in great hopes Lady Catherine will persuade my father to dismiss Sir Henry; heaven grant she may! for the sweet girl will not be right till then. I think, my dear Sophia, among all your other vexations, love is not one of them; for either you have been very sly, or the little god has not yet troubled you; but take care if Sir Andrew Mead's ward should prove a gentleman, he may make a strange bustle in your heart. My lord has just sent to let me know the
carriage

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carriage waits to take me to the Pantheon; therefore must subscribe myself in haste,

A. WIMBLETON.

LETTER LI.

— STANLEY, Esq. to the Right Hon.
EDWARD WESTON,

Duke-Street, St. James's.

YOU will be amazed to see by the date of this that I am already in London. Indeed, Ned, I am far from well; an evil genius I verily believe has presided over me for this week past. Never in my life was I witness to two such melancholy scenes as within these few days. I believe I told you in my last that Lord Scamper and his lady intended setting off for town the following week; glad was I when the time arrived, being heartily sick

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sick of domestic feuds. I took the liberty of expostulating with my brother on his present way of life. For half an hour I had no other reply but a yawn; at last starting up in a passion, he said, " Confound it, sir, do not din me with my
 " estate; if I do run it out, I cannot deprive you of yours; neither should I
 " ever desire it." " But consider, (I
 " replied) you are married, and should
 " confine your own expences, in order
 " to confine those of your lady's; consider the bills you are again running
 " up with your trades-people, though
 " the many you contracted before marriage are not yet cleared off. It is
 " true, your estate is large, but if you
 " had as many millions as you have thousands, you might contrive to spend
 " them without doing the least real good
 " to any one. Your lady the whole
 " world knows to be of an expensive
 " turn, therefore it behoves you to set a
 " few

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“ few different examples to her than what
“ you do.” “ Ah, Stanley ! what do you
“ understand of the management of a
“ wife ? Young ladies marry to have their
“ liberty, not to be directed by their
“ husbands. My trades-people, ’tis true,
“ I am largely in arrears with, but they
“ must wait for the money as they must
“ from many others : when I have any to
“ spare I shall pay them part, till then
“ they must wait with patience.” Then
ringing his bell, he ordered his things
to dress. I found it vain to say any
more, therefore left him to his own co-
gitations, and the next morning set out
for Sir Thomas Bell’s.

I fear my brother and his lady will
continue their extravagant courses till
they are entirely ruined ; but let this dis-
agreeable subject rest.

I arrived at Sir Thomas’s without any
accident, and was told my lady was dan-
gerously ill, but notwithstanding, Sir Tho-

mas

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mas and his daughter were gone out a hunting. Why don't you send for them? said I, to the servant. Alas! sir, said he, I have, but could get neither of them to attend to me, though I told Miss Bell her mother was dying.

You may think how I was shocked at their unnatural behaviour, and determined to go in pursuit of them myself; when Lady Bell's woman came down, and with tears in her eyes told me her lady wanted to speak with me. I went up stairs and entered her room in silence: she was supported with pillows. With a faint smile she said, "This is a favour, Mr. Stanley, I did not expect, but as my end is approaching fast, I will beg you to deliver these two letters; the one to my husband, the other to my daughter. I could have wished to have seen them, but that satisfaction is denied me—at present—she will feel—very little—if any shock at my death."

She

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She then stopped, her voice faltering.
“ I find myself growing weak—God bless
“ you, Mr. Stanley—still continue your
“ friendship to my husband and child—
“ and perhaps—one day they will thank
“ you for it.” —

I really found myself unable to reply.
The placid resignation on her countenance, made her look indeed only fit for the blest regions for which she was preparing.

Oh! ye giddy females, who are now surrounded with splendor and pleasure, may you, when the day shall arrive to call you hence, be equally prepared as this lovely woman, who is cut off in the prime of life!

I went to the bedside, and bending one knee to the ground, took the letters, at the same time pressing the clay-cold hand that gave them to me, but unable to speak, left the room. About an hour after, her maid entered my apartment, and with

K

eyes

eyes swimming in tears, told me her lady was no more. She told me that having received the sacrament, she appeared composed, but suddenly she started, and having cast her eyes round the room, as if in search of somebody, sighed, and expired. The man entirely forsook me, and I gave way to sorrow, which I neither could nor desired to check. In a very short time I heard the voice of Sir Thomas and his daughter, the latter of whom was calling for cold meat and a can of ale; with this addition, "for I am confounded hungry."

I went down stairs and entered the parlour just as Miss Bell was saying, "Why, what the duce ails the fellows?" "they all appear stupid. Ah! Mr. Stanley, I'm glad to see you; how do you do?" I bowed, and turning to Sir Thomas, "I am sorry, sir, to find so melancholy a change in your house." "What change, my lad? we have had
"brave

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"brave sport! have we not, my girl?"
"I mean, sir, (interrupted I) the illness
"of your lady, as she is in the arms of
"death." "How, my lad! why she is
"not dead, is she?" "She is." And I
gave her letter to each.

Sir Thomas, when he had half read it
(by which time the tears flowed plenti-
tifully from his eyes) put it in his pocket,
saying, "Poor girl! she was a good obe-
"dient wife; and I will never take ano-
"ther for her sake."

Miss Bell shewed very little concern;
so little indeed, that she turned the little
regard I might have felt for her, into
contempt, not to say hatred. I told them
that night I should set off for town in the
morning. They pressed me to stay, but
I refused. Sir Thomas, who really
shewed more concern than I expected,
after having seen his deceased lady, in-
sisted on my accepting a diamond ring of
her's, and wearing it for her sake.

I set off at five in the morning, but finding myself very indifferent, determined to stay the remainder of the day at the inn where I dined; I was so very ill all the afternoon and all night, that my servant begged me to stay there a day or two, till I was recovered. I consented, and it being a fine warm spring morning, set out as soon as I had breakfasted for a walk. Being deep in thought, I strolled farther than I at first intended; so far indeed, that I was at a loss to find the way back again. I was looking round in hopes of seeing some little cottage where I could enquire, when I espied a person at a little distance, with two children, standing at the door; I immediately made up to it, and discovered they were crying.

As soon as I got near enough to speak to be heard, I asked them what ailed them? I then found they were two boys, and both so alike, that it was impossible to know

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know one from the other. "O, sir!
" (cried they both at once) here is my
" poor mamma in a sad way; I think
" she talks of dying, and we don't know
" what to make of it." "Where is she,
" my love?" said I. "In here, sir."
At the same time pushing open the door.
I entered; but, good heaven! what a
sight did I behold! Two rugs, which
had once been blankets, laid on the floor,
on which lay the most miserable object
my eyes ever beheld! She was wrapt
in a loose gown, which did but just cover
her; one stool, and a half broken table
were the only furniture of the room.

I stood still for a moment in speechless
agony, at the sight which presented itself;
at length, finding the poor creature on
the ground did not perceive me, I said
to the children, "For heaven's sake!
" is this your mamma? How long has
" she been in this condition, and what

“ is the meaning of her being in this way ?”

At that moment she raised herself on her elbow, and faintly cried, “ Who is here ?” “ One (replied I, advancing) who wishes to relieve you.” I now saw she was young, and had (or at least had had) a beautiful face. “ What angel is this who thus tries to mitigate my sorrow ? but, alas ! I am too weak to talk.” Again she sunk on the floor, almost fainting. I looked round me in the greatest distress, but seeing nothing that could contribute to her recovery, I hurried out of the room, and made the best of my way to a public-house, which I had perceived about half a mile from this little hovel. I ran as fast as my legs could carry me, and to my great joy procured some white wine, with a few biscuits, and a little hartshorn. Hastening back I gave her some drops, which seemed to revive her ; and spying a
broken

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broken tea cup over the chimney, I poured out some wine, which I had the pleasure to see her swallow.

She now grew better, when lifting up her eyes to heaven, she cried, "Blest God, I thank you, I have now some hope of forgiveness, which before I almost despaired of. Ah, sir! you have revived a wretch who was just expiring for want; my end I still feel is not far off, yet do I hope my two poor babes will meet with some kind protector to keep them from starving." I begged her to compose and not exhaust herself with talking. "You are very good, sir, (said she) but the little I do say must be now, as I am certain I have not half an hour to live." "If you think your time is so short (I returned) you had better dedicate it to prayer; if those are your two children, be assured they shall never want; if they have no father, I will supply the

“ place of one.” She looked at me with
 astonishment, but through surprise and
 joy again fainted. Being once more re-
 covered, she begged me to hear her:
 “ For, sir, (continued she) I should not
 “ die in peace to leave you in ignorance,
 “ to whom you extend your bounty.
 “ My father was a man who lived on a
 “ small estate he had about ten miles
 “ from Oxford. I was his only child,
 “ and often has he said, his only com-
 “ fort: my mother I lost when young.
 “ He gave me the best education, and
 “ spared no expence to make me mistress
 “ of every accomplishment. When I was
 “ about eighteen, I became acquainted
 “ with a gentleman who belonged to the
 “ university. To make short, he pre-
 “ tended to be very much in love with
 “ me, and having by flattery and pre-
 “ sents gained my affections, he per-
 “ suaded me to elope. I did, and from
 “ that fatal day have never known a mo-
 “ ment’s

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“ment’s peace. In about three month’s
“after I had left home, he told me he
“was summoned to town by his father;
“he gave me a note of fifty pounds,
“telling me if he did not return in a
“fortnight he would remit me more
“money. I begged him to leave direc-
“tions where I might write to him, but
“he refused me, alledging as a reason,
“that if it should fall into his father or
“brother’s hands, he should be undone
“for ever.

“For six months I never heard any
“thing of him. I was in great distress,
“as I had not only spent the fifty pounds
“he had given me, but what little I had
“of my own, excepting ten guineas.
“Soon after this I was delivered of
“twins: the two children, sir, you now
“see before you. The expences attend-
“ing their birth, bereft me of my last
“guinea, and indeed almost of my senses;
“when one afternoon the nurse told me

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“ a gentleman of the name of Stanley
“ desired to speak to me ; [you may be
“ sure, Ned, I started at this name, but
“ said nothing] joy for some moments
“ bereft me of my senses, but when I
“ recovered I found myself in his arms.
“ For two months we were compleatly
“ happy in each other’s company ; but
“ about that time he received a letter
“ from his brother, to inform him of the
“ death of his father. He again left me,
“ assuring me that as soon as his affairs
“ were settled he would return to me
“ again.

“ For fourteen months I neither heard
“ of or saw him ; neither did I know by
“ what name to enquire, as he would
“ never tell me the title of his father. I
“ received a letter from him, but only
“ signed Stanley, wherein was enclosed
“ a bank note for a hundred pounds ;
“ adding, it was all I must expect from
“ him, as he was going abroad.

“ I leave

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“ I leave you, fir, to guefs the fituation
“ of my mind. I refolved to go to town,
“ and difcharged all my little debts for
“ that purpofe, but had but juft got to
“ the fecond ftage, when both my poor
“ babies were feized with the meafles.

“ They foon recovered, but the ex-
“ pences I had been at leffened my fmall
“ flock of money greatly. I at length
“ got to London, but could gain no
“ tidings of any fuch perfon. Finding
“ all my fearch fruitlefs I determined to
“ quit town, and hearing this was a cheap
“ place, refolved to come to it. I did fo,
“ and have dragged on three years in this
“ miferable fituation. I tried for work,
“ but could get none. The landlord of
“ this hut, who keeps a large inn, came
“ the other day for his rent, but very
“ humanely told me he would wait for it
“ fome time longer. I difpofed of every
“ thing but what you fee to procure bread
“ for my children, but for myfelf, have

“not drank a drop or tasted a morsel
 “since yesterday morning. Even my
 “poor little babes have had nothing to
 “day but a small biscuit, and we must
 “all three have expired for want, had it
 “not been for your friendly interference.”

Here she stopped.

Having questioned this unhappy woman more clearly, I found they were my brother's children; for she not only shewed me his hand writing but a lock of his hair. The poor creature fainted with joy when she heard me acknowledge the children for my nephews.

To draw a veil over this melancholy subject, 'spite of my endeavours to the contrary, (for I dispatched a man from the public-house I mentioned above, to my inn, which belonged to her landlord, for a doctor, and likewise for my servant) though she was let blood and had several nourishing things, she expired before morning. She intreated me to take
 care

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care of her poor babies; which I solemnly assured her I would.

I had her buried decently, and then set off for town with my two little cherubs; but when I arrived here, found myself too ill to resolve on any thing; two days have elapsed since I came. What I shall say to my brother, I know not. Hervey advises me to put them to board a little way out of town, which I believe I shall.

I am too tired at present to proceed a stroke further, but will write again soon. Remember me to your brother, and believe me

Yours,

STANLEY.

LETTER.

LETTER LII.

LADY MARY MANLY to Miss TALMASH.

O Mercy upon us, where will all this end! Nothing but weeping from morn to dewy eve; 'tis horrid, monstrous provoking to force the poor child to marry against her inclination. I am sure I do all I can to make him like me; but no, the more difficulty, the more they persevere.

But I forget, Ethelinda, that all this time you know nothing of the matter. Why then to make the matter as short as possible, (for you know I abominate a long story) daddy and mammy, forgive the vulgar terms, but it is the fashion now for the *quality* to be so, and the other sort of folk to *mimpe* and speak fine; but this being nothing to my subject, I will endeavour to be a little more intelligible.

Mr,

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Mr. and indeed Mrs. Watson, seem inclined to force poor Eliza into matrimony against her inclination. Dear girl, I am sure I pity her much, as she is of too delicate a constitution to bear any kind of force. I believe, my dear, you have seen Sir Henry Fortescue. He is the man who so strongly assails the heart of my poor cousin; though I am strongly tempted to believe she has no heart to give; for I think, was she disengaged, she could have no objection to him, as he is in general allowed, as men go now, unexceptionable; both in person and morals. He certainly has one disagreeable failing; a failing, to speak seriously, I could never put up with; but I am certain my cousin is insensible of it, as he is very careful in her company, and Mrs. and Mr. Watson's never to discover it. Often have I wished myself a man to chastise him, as I have frequently heard him in company speak in the most contemptible

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temptible manner of a woman; yet oft times you would think he adored them. In short, my dear, unless you have met with men of this stamp, you can have no conception of my meaning; but in my mind these sort of men set a much higher value on their own sweet persons than on that of their wives. Certain it is, that Sir Henry Fortescue, unless altered very lately, is a man of this stamp; and let me ask you if a woman can be happy with such a one? Certainly not; as nothing would mortify me more than to be continually degraded by my husband. For instance, if I wish to have a piece of furniture, or a servant, or any other article I have taken a fancy to, to hear my lord and master (as they are foolishly called) cry, "Pshaw, child, how should you know? a woman is too insignificant a being to know her own mind long together." If those are not the exact words, they are very near. Now do
you

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you think (for you have seen her) poor Eliza can be happy with such a man? Certainly no; and it shall be my care to make him appear in his proper colours to the old folks. A lucky thought hath this moment entered my head: Lady Worthy knows him thoroughly, and as she has great influence over my uncle and aunt, and likewise a strong affection for my poor coz. she may prevail on them to dismiss him.

I will hasten to conclude, in order to get about my scheme, as I have a *presentiment* it will succeed. Wish success to

Yours,

M. MANLY.

LETTER

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LETTER LIIL.

Sir HENRY FORTESCUE to Lord REVEL.

I Received yours in a confounded gloomy fit, Revel. Would you believe it, I am near being outwitted by a woman!

You may remember in my last I told you I was going to a ball at Lady Dancer's. There were several females I knew, and as I am very certain all the *sex* delight in flattery and small-talk, especially from us, I invented the most fulsome compliments I could think of to please them. By this *mode* of proceeding I have acquired the title of a *charming fellow*, a dear devil, an agreeable flatterer, &c. from the silly coquettes.

There are a few who suspect, I believe, my real sentiments, therefore I am forced to be more on my guard than ever. You may say if you please, Are we not their lords

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lords and masters? then why the devil should they have the upper hand, or be made such a fuss with! However, you have known my opinion long ago.

After some little time spent in chat, (for there was not one I thought worthy of my hand) a lady, whose face I did not recollect, entered. She was tall and well made, had a fine oval face, and an exceeding good complexion. I enquired of Wakton who she was. He informed me she was a Miss Watson, sister to Lady Wimbleton.

Advancing towards her, I begged the honour of her hand; which with a graceful air she assented to. She was very serious, and seemed to pay very little if any attention to the compliments I paid her. In short, she appeared quite different from any of the females I had hitherto conversed with. The next day, hearing she had a very large fortune, I paid a visit to her father, who is at the Countess of Chorbury's

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Chorlebury's, with whom you know I am very intimate. She is sister indeed to Mrs. Watson.

I begged to speak to Mr. Watson alone, and having acquainted him with the purport of my visit, entreated his interference with his lovely daughter. He replied, she was at present out of town with Lord and Lady Wimbleton; but as he knew of no engagement she was under, he should on her return make her acquainted with my proposals, which he had not the least doubt of her accepting. I must bid you adieu for the present, as it is time to dress, but will resume my pen again by next post.

Yours,

H. FORTESCUE.

LETTER

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LETTER LIV.

Sir HENRY FORTESCUE to Lord REVEL.

THE day Miss Watson was expected in town, I was invited to dine at the Countess of Chorlebury's. There being a large company, I had no opportunity of speaking to her alone; and she retired early in the evening, with a pain in her head. I called again the next morning, and declared myself her lover. But would you believe it, Revel, she refused me! though in a manner so mild, so gentle, that were I not persuaded the whole sex were alike, I should think it impossible for Eliza Watson to be deceitful. She will not own she feels the least *tendresse* for any man; and at the same time she refuses me, declares she thinks herself highly honoured by my addresses. She begs me to desist from my visits, and assures me she can never be mine. In my

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my own mind I think she only uses this method to draw me further on; for why the devil should she refuse me? I am in general reckoned handsome by the sex; blest with a good stock of assurance, *a great stimulative to women in general*; and a good estate, clear of all incumbrances; so at least I endeavour to make the world think; but mum for that. But now methinks it is high time to give you a reason for the beginning of my last.

Lady Mary Manly, the Countess of Chorlebury's daughter, though a true woman of fashion, is contrary to the majority of them, blest with a great share of penetration and sense. She has likewise a great deal of wit; and so keen is her wit, that whoever falls under the lash of it, is greatly to be pitied. Her ladyship and I never agreed; for as she has discovered the contempt I have for her sex in general, she never spares me; now in particular since I have declared myself
her

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her cousin's suitor, she exercises her satirical vein without the least mercy; notwithstanding which I treat her with as much respect and fawning civility as a cringing courtier would some of our great men in power, whom a few weeks ago he despised. Thus it is with me, as in my heart I sincerely wish her at the devil. She has likewise got on her side that old tabby Lady Catherine Worthy; as she is a great favourite with Eliza and Mr. and Mrs. Watson, they will lay their heads together to use all the influence in their power to dissuade them from the match, more especially as they find the girl averse to it. I have not yet however lost the good opinion of the old folks; and devil a one else have I on my side, for Wimbleton insists on standing neuter, as he will not believe, 'spite of all I can say, that I have any real affection for his fair sister-in-law. My lady don't like to speak in my favour, as she finds

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finds her sister averse. Besides those eternal babblers Lady Mary and Lady Catherine are against me ; and the greatest evil of *all*, the lady herself has taken a firm resolution never to be mine. Therefore the best way for me I believe will be, to make an honourable retreat, and at once give her up, as I am persuaded it is as easy to row against tide, as to change a woman's resolution when once taken. Farewel.

Yours,

HENRY FORTESCUE.

Write soon. I knew young Brooks at college, but have never seen his sister.

LETTER

LETTER LV.

Hon. E. WESTON to ——— STANLEY, Esq.

I With you joy, my friend, of your *deux enfans*. Upon honour you are very obliging, to father the children of your brother, especially as he is such a kind one; but seriously, Stanley, I pity you greatly, as does my brother, for faith, my lad, you have had two melancholy bouts. I cannot help thinking you had more than esteem for Lady Bell; for though I never suspected it before, I have often thought it odd, that with your person and fortune you never seemed inclined for a matrimonial voyage. Your two boys, I think if I had been in your place, I should have settled with some person in the country; for depend on it, the world will swear they are yours; as I would lay my life your brother will not own them.

L

I always

I always thought Lord Scamper a fop, but now I most heartily despise him; but I suppose, as you say, he will not rest till he has fooled away his estate, and then 'spite of what he told you, he will contrive to get part of yours; and yet you have taken his two brats under your care. What the duce is Hervey about that he don't write to my brother? But desire him not to send any of his doleful epistles, for he is doleful enough already. What does that old surly dog our uncle keep in the same mind still? I wish to heaven he was as much eaten up by the spleen as I am at this moment: well we, or at least I (for my lord is out of the question) may, for the devil a rational being have we to speak to but one, and he is going soon, and then I verily believe our old stubborn uncle may provide us with a lodging in bedlam; for George will be melancholy, and I raving mad.

You

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You will call this I suppose a short letter, and so it is, considering your long one; but what can I do? We have no adventures here; nor can I meet with either *living* or *dying* angels; nor pick up two *precious cherubs* to keep, as a certain acquaintance of mine hath; however, I long to hear the end of the affair. Do not fail writing, and desire Hervey to do the same.

Yours sincerely,

EDWARD WESTON.

LETTER LVI.

Miss BROOKS to Miss LAROACH.

Bath.

YOU desire to know how I pass my time here; upon honour, Bab, I can scarce tell you. I have a great many admirers, but none I can approve: one indeed in

L 2

my

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my mind is every way unexceptionable; he has a fine person, and it is said a good estate; but my brother rather thinks he is an Irish fortune-hunter, for which reason he don't wish me to give him any serious encouragement. His rank (for he is a lord) makes me wish to keep him in my train. I certainly should have no objection to Revel for a husband, were I certain it was myself, not my fortune, he was after; having too expensive a turn to marry a man who only seeks after *that*. The women here are ready to pull my cap for engrossing this pretty fellow almost entirely to myself. He follows me like my shadow, and is offended if I dance with any body else. He is quite the man of fashion in dress and behaviour, and the beaux here strive to copy him as near as possible. He is very fond of cards, and I am told engages very deep in play. In short, Lord Revel would have stood a much fairer chance some months ago to have

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have succeeded, but a few hours conversation with the elegant Wimbleton must drive every other man out of my head.

Heavens! that a being so every way formed to charm, should be matched to such an inanimate piece of stupidity. Little does her ladyship know the plot I am forming. Conscience, if I had any, she would rise against me for thus planning her destruction. Her ladyship took a very great fancy to me, notwithstanding her sister I am certain took pains to set her against me.

I have received a very obliging letter from *her*, as my brother has from her *lord*, begging us to hasten to town that they may have the pleasure of our company. You may be sure we shall very soon accept of this invitation, as my brother is as much in love with Lady Wimbleton as *I* am with my lord. In about a week I imagine we shall set off. How Lord Revel will like my departure I

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know not, but if he has any gallantry he will most certainly follow. You will say this is a dull scrawl, but having nothing more amusing at present, remain

Yours,

HELEN BROOKS.

LETTER LVII.

JOHN HERVEY, Esq. to LORD WESTON.

I Should have answered yours, my dear George, ere this, had I had one agreeable subject to entertain you with. Prepare yourself for a blow which must sooner or later happen. The charms of Miss Watson make daily havock, and her father and mother wish her to chuse one out of the many who flutter around her; they indeed have fixed on a man who few would refuse; yet, that the fair

Eliza

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Eliza does refuse Sir Henry Fortescue is very certain.

Mr. and Mrs. Watson persuade her to the match ; not that they I believe intend to use any force. I called there this morning to enquire after her health, as she has been indisposed, I was told she was much better, and was in the parlour. She was reading when I entered, but laying her book down, thanked me with great politeness for the enquiries I had made after her health. Mr. Watson entering, changed the discourse : first politics, then the war engrossed our attention ; when he observed how many brave men had lost their lives. “ Yes, sir, “ (returned I) many indeed ; I am afraid “ I shall never see two worthy young “ friends of mine any more, as I believe “ they are now on their way to America.” “ In the army, or navy, sir ?” asked Mr. Watson. “ In the army, sir ; they were “ in the militia, but being unfortunate,

“ they purchased a commission, and are
 “ now at Guernsey, from whence in a
 “ short time they will set sail for America.”
 “ You say they are friends, may I ask
 “ their names ?” “ Farmborough and
 “ Westbury.” I here glanced my eye to
 Miss Watson, and observed her pale as
 ashes, though she endeavoured to hide
 her confusion by putting her handkerchief
 to her face. “ Bless me, (replied Mr.
 “ Watson) are they not the two gen-
 “ tlemen, Eliza, who lodged at Farmer
 “ Hobson’s ?” To my great chagrin she
 was prevented making a reply by the ser-
 vants announcing Sir Henry Fortescue.
 She seemed scarce able to answer the
 compliments Sir Henry made on her re-
 covery, and on the entrance of more
 company left the room.

I think I may venture to say she is in
 love with one of you, which I know not;
 but I do not think she will ever consent
 to marry Fortescue. Your uncle I am
 sorry

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forry to say is still inexorable, though I flatter myself you will both be pleased to hear we are again friends, but I find it vain to plead in your behalf, he says there are many follies that may be deemed excuseable in youth; but, added he yesterday morning, they very well knew the antipathy I had to gaming of any sort; therefore if they would not take warning by my counsel, they must by my displeasure; they are young, and it is no disgrace, notwithstanding their rank, to be of service to their king and country.

I too well know, my friends, this can be no ways agreeable to you, but what signifies giving hopes where there are none? but do not despair, you may assure yourselves of my best services. I had almost forgot to tell you that the Earl has been offered a very high post in the new ministry which is forming, but he has refused it, for he says he chuses to spend the rest of his life as quiet as possible,

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therefore he cannot think of engaging in any public department. Politics I dare say you are as little inclined to hear, as I am to write about. News there is very little, none worth relating; you will therefore very readily give me leave to subscribe myself

Your sincere friend,

J. H.

LETTER LVIII.

Lord REVEL to Sir HENRY FORTESCUE.

UPON honor, Henry, you deserve to be pillory'd for the contemptible light you hold the most beautiful part of the creation in. Can any thing mortal be more lovely than a good woman? Are they not the soothers, the sweeteners of our cares? To be sure one possessed of bad qualities, is the very devil; as I believe

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lieve great part of our sex would be saved from the gallows, were it not for the poisonous advice of such females. But then again, let me ask you, are we not indebted to them for our very existence? Could our minds be modelled, our understandings improved, or our very lives bearable, were it not for them?

We are allowed to have wiser heads than the other sex; why then cannot we select the good from the bad? For instance; must I, because I love a woman, be persuaded to run my head into a halter? On the other hand, if I meet with a good one, am I to condemn her with the bad, and immediately say, such an one is good for nothing, you must be the same? However, I might as well spare myself the trouble of trying to convince you of the wrong you do yourself by thus despising the women; as you thereby deprive yourself of their society; and I will venture to lay my life, if you do not

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marry

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marry Miss Watſon, you will ſelect one who is a very virago ; and 'faith ſerve you right. Indeed if I thought there was any danger of your marrying the lady above-mentioned, I would, though I have never ſeen her, diſſuade her from the match, as I am certain you would break her heart in leſs than a twelvemonth. But enough of a ſubject you have ſo often heard my ſentiments upon ; I ſhall not much longer remain here, there not being one agreeable object to detain me.

Miss Brooks I have diſcovered to be one of the very indifferent ſort of females, who is ſure to point out foibles in others, which ſhe is daily guilty of herſelf. She at firſt threw out all the allurements of beauty and good humour to attach me to her alone ; but the moment ſhe thought herſelf ſecure of my affections, threw off the maſque, and appeared in her true character, which is a compound of affectation, ill-nature, and hypocrify. Such
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an one I will allow is to be avoided ; but that is no rule I am to condemn every other I may chance to meet with in my future peregrinations.

She talks of soon going to town on a visit to a friend : may that friend, whoever she is, have no reason to repent the invitation. Her brother I leave nameless, having very little acquaintance with him. The people here have given me the appellation of fortune-hunter ; I take no pains to undeceive them ; I am rather indeed obliged to them, as by that means I have discovered Miss Brooks's disposition ; it being only since that report she has shewn herself in her true colours. It is true, my estate is not very large, and I cannot possibly think of marrying a woman without a fortune, yet would I not wed such an one as the lady above-mentioned, were she possessed of millions.

Yours,

A. REVEL.
LETTER

LETTER LIX.

Miss RICHINGFORD to LADY
WIMBLETON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

TWENTY employments have I tried
this day, but found none to suit
me. I have taken up my pen to write to
you, yet have no subject: I don't know
what is the matter with me, but believe
I am eaten up with the vapours. Let me
see, where is your letter? O! here; but
that does not tend to expel the gloom that
hangs over me. Your sister I pity, yet
blame her for fretting after a man she
may never see again. Indeed she ought
to shake off the chain, and be more her-
self; I am really ashamed, though un-
known to her. It is true, as you say,
with all my troubles I have never been
in love; and heaven forbid I should, if
I am to make a fool of myself. Was
your

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your sister to see this, she might be offended at my speaking my sentiments so freely, as I am unknown to her; but blame her I must, and blame her I will. Thus having vented a little of my spleen, I will go and take a walk, and then finish my letter.

Four o'Clock.

Worse, and worse! Because I was not dull enough before, I am going to lose the only rational being I have to speak to.

I called on Mrs. Ludlow, who was just preparing to pay a visit to a friend who lives about ten miles off. She just took time to tell me, as she was sitting in the chaise, that Sir Andrew Mead and lady would be here the week after next, with a Lady Betty Bolton, who is his ward, and a gentleman who is supposed to be an humble servant of her ladyship's. Thus you see, there is no chance left for me.

Heigh

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Heigh ho! I verily believe I must die that terrible thing an old maid. Pray, if you know any thing of this Lady Betty, let me know, as I can then better judge what sort of a companion I shall have. Heaven send she may be social, that I may have somebody to speak to. But, craving your ladyship's pardon, I have no great opinion of her, as she is a female of quality. I may as well here put an end to my scribble, therefore subscribe myself

Your ladyship's

Most humble devoted,

SOPHIA RICHINGFORD.

LETTER LX.

Miss WATSON to Miss NEWTON.

I Have been very ill, my dear Harriot, or your last favour should have been acknowledged before now. The anxiety I under-

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I underwent both of body and mind, brought on a fever; but a constitution naturally good, with good nursing and the protecting hand of Providence, have entirely recovered me. I yesterday morning, however, received a shock which had nigh thrown me back again. Mr. Hervey called to enquire how I did, which indeed I am told he did every day during my illness; my father and he discoursing about the war, the latter said he was afraid he had parted for ever with two young friends, who were sent to America. My father asked their name; when Hervey answered, Farmborough and Westbury. Nature could scarce sustain the blow, and I thought I should have fallen senseless to the floor; but the fear of being discovered, saved me; though I found it impossible to trust my voice to answer my father, who said, "They must be the two gentlemen, Eliza, who lodged at Farmer Hobson's." The
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entrance of Sir Henry Fortescue (never till that moment agreeable to me) made a reply unnecessary. He paid me many compliments on my recovery. Why, my Harriot, can I not like this man? his behaviour is both tender and polite; my cousin indeed will have it, he holds women in general in a despicable light; and indeed rallies him most unmercifully thereon. Lady Catherine is not his friend; and indeed the poor man has very few of his side except papa and mamma, and their opinion would have great weight with me, if my heart was free to choose; but as it is not, though I am ashamed to own it, would it not be an unpardonable fault to give my hand without it. Yet I think I shall now soon get the better of this foolish passion. As he is gone abroad it is a hundred chances to one if ever I should see him again if he should return. A message from my father. Adieu for the present.

LETTER

LETTER LXI.

MISS WATSON to MISS NEWTON.

JOY to me, my dear friend, my father hath dismissed Sir Henry Fortescue, and generously assures me he never will force my choice; but at the same time tells me he will not give his consent to my marrying a man destitute of rank and fortune. A man of merit, my dear Eliza, continued he; is very desirable, but merit alone will not provide for a wife and family. I thanked him with heart-felt gratitude, and assured him he might rely on my honour, that I never would encourage any man he did not approve. My mamma, aunt, cousin, and Lady Catherine were present, I believe I am greatly indebted to the two latter for the breaking off the match. Sir Henry expressed

pressed much sorrow at being rejected; but, added he, I came with a full determination to inform you, sir, that I would withdraw my addresses, as I found them so very disagreeable to Miss Watson, but am afraid shall never cease to adore her but with my life.

This was told me by Lady Mary, as I was not present at his dismissal. Lady Catherine has begged papa and mamma to let me go with her to her house at Southampton, as she thinks the air will do me good. They have obligingly consented, and in about a week we shall set off. My cousin is continually teasing me with being in love; but I cannot bring myself to own my folly to another, though I am conscious of not acting a generous part, as she is an amiable girl and deserves all my confidence. No one but you and my sister know my foolish heart, and as I now propose to endeavour

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at least to forget such an one as Farmborough ever existed, I should do very wrong to probe the wound afresh by repeating the story to my cousin. My sister has been talking to me, and begs me to listen to the addresses of some worthy man. She tells me I ought to forget the captain. I know it well, and will try to comply with her request. You ask in your last if I think she is happy? Indeed I do, as Lord Wimbleton makes a tender and affectionate husband. They have written to Sir William and Miss Brooks to invite them to town. I cannot altogether approve that Miss Brooks, neither can I give any justifiable reason for disliking her.

Lord Wimbleton has had a friend with him for some time, a very agreeable, sensible, well-bred man, but talks of leaving them soon; his name is Rivers. I have no news to write you, as I leave politics

to

to be discussed by the gentlemen, therefore will put an end to this, and subscribe myself

Your sincere friend,

ELIZA WATSON.

Let your next be directed to me at Lady Catherine Worthy's, Southampton.

LETTER LXII.

STANLEY, Esq. to the Hon.
EDWARD WESTON.

Duke-Street.

YOUR last, Ned, was the oddest composition I ever read. Why, man, you are turned an absolute Turk! Would you have had me, supposing I had not found them allied to me, leave two innocent babies to perish for want, while I had the power to relieve them? or place them in a country town where I knew no soul?

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soul? As to the world, I despise it. Charity, religion, modesty, and justice, are too old fashioned, too vulgar for this polite age. Why should I then pay attentions to its censure, when conscience tells me I act right. They are welcome to say they are mine.

If I meet with a woman I like, I can easily undeceive her, by telling the truth. Your insinuations concerning poor Lady Bell are untrue. I certainly admired and most sincerely esteemed her, but love I most solemnly assure you I have not yet felt for any woman: I esteem and admire many, but nothing farther. I am sorry to hear so indifferent an account of your brother; Hervey had sent a letter off the very day before I received yours, and which we are both afraid will not tend to raise his spirits. The day after I dispatched my last to you I went to Lord Scamper's, it was one o'clock, but was told his lordship was not up.

I how-

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I however walked in, and told the fellows I would wait till he was stirring; about a quarter after two the gentleman made his appearance. "God bless my
 "foul, Stanley! why I thought you a hundred miles off; and in mourning too!"
 "I should not have been in town so soon
 "I believe my lord, (said I) had it not
 "been for an affair I met with that concerns you. My being in mourning is
 "only for a few days in compliment to
 "a friend." "Oh! but pray, sir, what
 "affair is this which concerns me?"
 "Did you know a Miss Patty Cheffun, of
 "Oxford?" He coloured, and after some
 hesitation, "Yes, I did."

"Then you likewise know you have
 "two sons."

"Who, I?" "Yes, you, my lord."

"It may be so, sir, but whatever may
 "be your reasons for asking me, I assure
 "you I shall never own them."

"No!

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“ No! that is hard ; but I suppose you
“ will make some provision for them.”

“ No, sir, I shall make none ; nor do
“ I ever desire to hear of them or their
“ mother.”

After this he was walking away, “ Stay
“ my lord, (cried I, seizing his arm) I
“ have more to say to you. The poor
“ girl herself is dead, therefore wants
“ none of your assistance now, though had
“ she received it some time ago she might
“ still have been alive.”

“ What (sneering) are you in mourn-
“ ing for her then ?”

“ No, I am not, nor should I have
“ known such a person existed, had it not
“ been for a slight indisposition which de-
“ tained me at the inn I stopped at, a
“ day longer than I intended.”

I now told him the whole affair, but
was forced to curtail it, his patience being
quite exhausted when I had done.

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“ Well,

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“ Well, Stanley, (said he) you have
“ told me a pretty story I must confess;
“ and if you are silly enough to take care
“ of all the children that chance may
“ throw in your way, you will in time
“ have a large family.”

“ This trifling, my lord, is ridiculous.
“ I only beg you will answer me one
“ question? which is, Will you provide
“ for your two children till such time as
“ they are able to procure their own
“ living?”

“ A very pretty request, upon my soul,
“ Mr. Stanley ! but as I am in a hurry,
“ I will be as concise as possible, and
“ plainly tell you I will not.”

“ Then you will leave them to beggary
“ and want?”

“ No, I do not absolutely say that,
“ but let them go to some of the places
“ assigned for such children.”

“ And so your lordship will be under
“ no concern for the whole town to talk
“ that

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“that Lord Scamper had suffered two
“children of his to go to the Foundling.”

“Devil take the town, I care not a
“fixpence for it; I dare swear they
“would talk more were I to spend half
“my estate on two illegitimates; and so
“my good wife brother Stanley, I wish
“you a good morning.”

“But what am I to do with the two
“boys, Lord Scamper?”

“Whatever you please, sir; for I will
“do nothing for them.”

“Then you leave them to starve?”

“Yes, if no one will give them bread
“they must; and so once more I wish
“you a good morning.”

I could not help exclaiming, unfeeling
wretch! but he turned upon his heel,
hummed a tune, and walked down stairs.
I left the house, nor do I know I shall
ever again enter it.

I propose, with Hervey's advice, to
place my two boys at a small village in

M 2

Hertfordshire,

Hertfordshire, as that is reckoned a healthy county; they are two sweet fellows, and I assure you I shall be loath to part with them, for you know I was always fond of children. They are very fond of me, and call me papa; I let them do so, as I do not chuse they should stile me uncle, on account of my brother, whose cruel usage of them I would wish to conceal from the world.

Sir Andrew Mead, his lady, and Lady Betty Bolton are come to town. They propose setting off for Cumberland at Easter, where I intend, if I have settled my little family, to accompany them. Lady Betty is grown more affected than ever. I am afraid I shall spend but a dull sort of a summer, as they tell me there is not above two or three genteel families near, the principals of which are an old batchelor and three old maids. Sir Andrew and Lady Mead are very agreeable, but Lady Betty intolerable;

yet

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yet I think *she* must be preferable to Miss Bell, for though a fine lady is sometimes despicable, yet a woman who has neither female modesty or delicacy is hateful. Here being an end to my paper, I will subscribe myself

Yours sincerely,

STANLEY.

LETTER LXIII.

The Hon. LORD WESTON to JOHN HERVEY, Esq.

I Received yours this morning, but upon honour, Hervey, I am very much displeased with you. You are surprised; but indeed, my friend, you was wrong in mentioning me, especially at such time when the dear girl was hardly recovered from her illness. I never dared to hope she had the least tenderness for me, it

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must

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must be my brother certainly ; though he declares it is no such thing, for he has all along flattered me with hopes I was not indifferent to her ; besides the name of Farmborough is fictitious ; and is it not carrying the deceit too far ? Indeed, my dear Jack, I never had reason to call your prudence in question before. You did it for the best, and I ought not to blame one who scarce ever does amiss ; pray excuse therefore what I have said above.

I hope you will not delay writing me word when she is married ; I am prepared I assure you for the worst. When that event takes place, I shall never desire to return to my native country. My uncle's pardon will be nothing to me, and I shall wish for the favour of none. If I could but see my brother restored to his paternal arms, I would instantly leave the army and retire to some sequestered spot,
and

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and spend the rest of my days in solitude. Here I have nothing to do ; the society of my brother officers I have no relish for. Ned drags me into company, but nothing will disperse my melancholy. I find myself unfit for writing, therefore must lay down my pen.

GEORGE WESTON.

LETTER LXIV.

Sir HENRY FORTESCUE to Lord REVEL.

MR. WATSON has dismissed me, and I am now at liberty to chuse a new mistress ; that I believe I shall not. For notwithstanding what you said in your last, I should have endeavoured to have made Miss Watson a good husband. I believe she is an exception to the rest of her sex ; but I have still the same opinion

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of them as ever; therefore, Revel, all your arguments are useless. Nay, have you not an instance of it yourself; you thought Miss Brooks an amiable girl, but thinking herself secure in your affections, she threw off the mask, and appeared in her true colours; yet you keep crying you will not condemn all for the sake of one; but try another, and another, and you will find them the same. In short, you may as well preach to the winds in defence of them.

The fair, but cruel Eliza, I hear sets off to-morrow for Southampton, with that old hag Lady Catherine Worthy. I shall now break off all acquaintance with the Countess of Chorlebury and her daughter. I do not know indeed whether I shall not take a trip to my own country. I wish you would accompany me, I want to see how affairs go there. Let me know by return of post if you go, and the shortest

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shortest time you can be ready in, for if you do not go with me, I shall set off immediately. Farewel.

Yours,

H. FORTESCUE.

LETTER LXV.

Miss WATSON to LADY WIMBLETON.

Southampton.

TWO hours are scarce elapsed since my arrival, yet will I not delay complying with my dear sister's request.

We had a tolerable journey for the time of year. You, my dear, have been here, therefore a description of the place is unnecessary, even if the time of my arrival would allow.

How are all our dear friends? Are Miss Brooks and Sir William come? Pray, my dear, be very minute when you write,

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write. Give my best love to Lady Mary, and tell her I shall be very impatient for one of the gay epistles she promised me. You will call this short, but will endeavour to make the next longer. Lady Catherine desires me to assure you of her unalterable esteem; as does your affectionate sister.

E. WATSON.

LETTER LXVI.

LADY WIMBLETON to Miss
RICHINGFORD.

HURRIED and fatigued with running from one amusement to another, I am determined to dedicate a few moments to my Sophia. I received your splenetic epistle just as I was going to the play. I sincerely pity you, and wish you was here with all my heart; but do not despair, for though I am not personally acquainted

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acquainted with Sir Andrew Mead and his lady, I am told they are very agreeable people. They are now in town, and the Countess of Chorlebury tells me (who knows them intimately) that they propose setting off for Cumberland at Easter; therefore you must wait with patience, as you find it is not so soon as Mrs. Ludlow thought. Lady Betty Bolton, as my cousin at least says, is proud and affected, past all endurance; I have seen her in public and think her very handsome. I can neither learn the name or connections of the gentleman that accompanies them.

Now for a word or two of my sister: Sir Henry Fortescue is dismissed, and she is gone with Lady Catherine Worthy to a house she has at Southampton. I have just received a short billet from her to let me know she is arrived safe. Sir William and Miss Brooks are come. I do not know how it is, but all my particular friends caution me so much against this girl;

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girl; for my own part I cannot help esteeming her. Even you in one of your letters bid me beware, because my sister you imagine would see further than I. It may be so, but why should I dislike a person who has never given me any offence. Nay, Lady Mary Manly, whom I made myself sure would like her, refuses to give her opinion as yet. I hope I am sure of my lord's heart. I am certain at present I have no other reason; besides, would a young lady of Miss Brooks's person and fortune strive to rob a woman of her husband's affections? neither have I so mean an opinion of my lord, or even of myself, as to think she would succeed were she to make the attempt. I must conclude, as I am waited for in the drawing-room, but will write again the first leisure moments I have to spare.

Yours,

A. WIMBLETON.

LETTER.

LETTER LXVII.

The Hon. EDWARD WESTON to ———
STANLEY, Esq.

UPON honor, Mr. Stanley, you have a great deal more patience than I should have with your brother ; for by the Lord, was mine to behave to me as Lord Scamper does to you, I would have nothing to do with him or his brats. What the plague ! be at the expence of keeping a couple of boys ! Not alone that, but be stigmatized in all companies, that you are the father of them ! for that the world will say depend on it.

Indeed, indeed, Stanley, you and Hervey are not at all fit for this age ; you are possessed of hearts too compassionate. I don't say that the children should have been left to starve, but 'faith, the whole town should have known whose they were ; if his lady was a different kind of woman,

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woman, such a report might make her very happy, but I am certain she is too indifferent about her husband to mind any thing of the sort. I am very uneasy about my poor brother. Hervey's last letter came very mal-apropos; his dejection having increased ever since, 'spite of my endeavours to the contrary. What can the Earl of Wallbrook mean; does he wish to shorten his days? for that he certainly will by his obstinacy: indeed he carries it too far. Were it only myself I could bear it, but to see an only brother, and an amiable one too, expiring by inches, is too much for mortal to bear. I really am half distracted; my spirits have never hitherto forsaken me, but I can sustain them no longer. Shew Hervey this, and tell him to try again; can the Earl be really so obdurate? He may repent when it is too late. Continue to write, as your friendly letters are the only amusement we have. I once said I should

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should never write to you concerning our own particular affairs, as I know you see all our letters to Hervey, as well as his to us; but I am so alarmed at the daily alteration I see in my brother, I cannot avoid mentioning it.

We have not the least amusement here; the weather is very disagreeable, and provisions are very dear. I wish some chance or other would throw my lord and Miss Watson in each other's way, as the being assured of her affection or dislike might cure him. I wait with impatience for another letter from Hervey, to know whether she is really married. Intreat him to plead for George; and do you likewise tell the Earl, that in a short time he will have no nephew left; for as he may be assured that I will never let him, though he may be ever so willing, either see or touch any thing belonging to the man I shall always consider as my brother's

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ther's murderer. No; in such a case, England shall never see my face again.

But enough, for I have almost worked myself into the horrors, as I imagine I have you. Farewel.

EDWARD WESTON.

End of the First Volume.